PINCH

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FADE IN:

INT. LOUNGE BAR, AIRPORT - DAY

The BUSINESS ELITE recline on leather armchairs. Fighting to eclipse one another with their suffocating tales.

Clinging to the bar is ALEX, thirties. Handsome, disarming smile. Obsession lurking just beneath the roguish facade.

ALEX
(to waiter)
Give me another, and let's skip the ice this time.

Alex reaches for his drink. Downs it. Considers a third--

BRUNETTE (O.S.)
Afraid of flying?

He turns, facing a shameless BRUNETTE with hungry eyes and clear intent. A prowler.

ALEX
Dutch courage... Miss?

The brunette slides in beside him. Flirting hard.

BRUNETTE
Let's not do names. It's more fun that way.

WAITER (O.S.)
What can I get you?

BRUNETTE
Martini. Two olives.

She rests an arm on the counter. A glittering, albeit trashy BRACELET hanging round her wrist.

ALEX
Now, why is a woman with a piece as shiny as that, wandering round an airport unescorted?

BRUNETTE
Maybe I'm too much to handle. My ex-husband certainly thought so.

The brunette fondles his arm. Shoots him a "fuck me" stare.

ALEX
You don't waste time.

BRUNETTE
My gate closes in twenty minutes.

Alex reciprocates. Caressing her hand. Moving up the wrist. It seems just a little too casual. Overly practiced.

ALEX
Well, I guess all I can say is...
have a good flight.

He reveals his WEDDING RING with a cocksure smile. The brunette responds with an acidic scowl. Moves off. Asshole.

Turning, Alex gives her BRACELET a cursory glance. Discards it like a used condom.

STONE (O.S.)
Cannot resist.

Alex spins to face the POLISHED FIGURE now occupying the brunette's seat. Easily an equal to our hero. Perhaps better.

Meet STONE, thirties. A tailored viper. The sort who views life as a war. He speaks broken English with a Slavic accent.

STONE (CONT'D)
Any excuse to play game. Even when
know should not.

They trade black looks. Tugging on chains.

ALEX
Maybe I'm just keeping sharp.

STONE
Then could use new move. Unless you
wish I see lift.

The snake pilfers the MARTINI. Spitting the olive STONES back into the glass. No pun intended.

ALEX
Something tells me you didn't come
here just for a drink.

STONE
I think both seek something... more
lucrative. Yes?

ALEX
I guess they don't have finders
keepers back in Bosnia.

Stone tosses him a chuckle. Anything but playful.

STONE
Still think like old man. Is open field now. Time embrace chaos.
(beat)
Could not help notice date. You Lisa fight again?

ALEX
(weakly)
It’s her day off.

STONE
Ah, well... best luck, Alex.

Stone slithers into the sea of PASSENGERS. Vanishing.

ALEX
Fifteen years and he still can’t speak the language.

No time to dwell on it. A pretty WOMAN is approaching him from a nearby bathroom.

Meet SAM, twenties. A fresh-faced, vulnerable young girl with a warm heart and a mild case of freckles.

SAM
Sorry. Too much coffee this morning. Who was that?

ALEX
Never mind. Let’s go.

They walk past a POSTER displaying a GOLD CROWN. The caption underneath reads “ROYAL EXHIBITION - UPPER CONCOURSE”.

INT. TERMINAL, AIRPORT - DAY

A maelstrom of ACTIVITY. Airwaves flooded with every dialect under the sun. Some shop. Others eat. All wait.

Among them, is KENNY, twenties. A scrappy, jack-of-all-trades type with a feral edge. In a word, twitchy.

He darts into the toilets. BAG over his shoulder. HEADPHONES dangling round his neck.

INT. TOILETS, AIRPORT - DAY

Kenny hurries into a cubicle. Removing a MAINTENANCE UNIFORM from his bag. He considers the JAR OF PILLS lying beneath...

Buckling, he unscrews the lid. Knocking back several pills. He shuts his eyes. Fighting to slow his breathing.

INT. SECURITY CHECKPOINT, AIRPORT - DAY

Indignity central. Sullen PASSENGERS snaking their way toward the scanners. Hoping to avoid the scarecrow position.

Within the throng is MARV, fifties, Irish. A skilled lifer of a thief with a measured level of weariness. An old sea dog.

Approaching the front of the line, he checks his watch. Glancing up and down the checkpoint.

PASSENGER (O.S.)
Gets worse every year, huh?

Marv turns. Encountering a bespectacled MAN in his thirties. One of those guys who's always tinkering with his phone.

Let's call him RICHIE.

MARV
Aye, that it does.

RICHIE (PASSENGER)
Yeah, I wonder what they're gonna tell me I can't take onboard this time. That's always a laugh.

MARV
I still haven't gotten over the toothpaste and mouthwash. Apparently ya're a nutter if you care about ya teeth.

Richie smiles, nods. Marv using the exchange as cover.

RICHIE
So where are you headed?

MARV
Kuwait.

Richie frowns. Staring up at Marv's ushanka (that distinctive Russian hat with flaps on the side).

RICHIE
Really? Are you expecting snow drifts in the desert?

MARV
Nah, this old thing was just to help me brave the streets at three in the morning.

Marv catches sight of one of the MONITOR INSPECTORS edging out of a door and onto the floor. Replacing a COLLEAGUE.

The inspector identifies Marv in the queue. The slightest of nods between them. He's a friend.

RICHIE
January travel. It's always a joy.

One of the robotic HANDLERS waves Marv forward.

MARV
Oh, looks like I'm up.

Marv edges up to the conveyor belt. Setting his hand luggage onto it, along with his hat and jacket.

He steps through the METAL DETECTOR. So far so good. He turns, waiting for his bag... suddenly the conveyor STOPS.

Marv swallows hard. Seconds pass... nothing. More seconds... and then, with a clunk, the conveyor suddenly jolts forward.

Marv reaches for his bag. Goosebumps all over.

RICHIE
Bloody thing. You'd think with all money they spend on those scanners, they could at least chip in for a decent motor. Well, enjoy the sand.

Richie gives him a wave and departs. Marv quickly follows. Not wasting any more time in the fly trap.

INT. TERMINAL, AIRPORT - DAY

Marv heads for the toilets. Kenny passing him, now wearing the UNIFORM. Eyes wandering like a meerkat. Wired.

INT. TOILETS, AIRPORT - DAY

Marv slips into a cubicle. Ripping the INNER LINING out of his hat. Extracting a flawless REPLICA of the GOLD CROWN.

MARV
Now remember what we talked about. No making a show of yerself, least not till we're clear.

He passes the crown under the next cubicle. Alex waiting to receive it. Burying it in a bag.

INT. TERMINAL, AIRPORT - DAY

Kenny makes his way toward a SECURITY DOOR. Sliding an ACCESS CARD through the READER... ERROR.

He tries it second time... ERROR. Again... ERROR... ERROR. He sweeps it faster. Making a scene. Panic setting in.

A no-nonsense AIRPORT OFFICER with a chiseled jaw catches sight of the display. Walking over.

KENNY
(under his breath)
No, no, no. Come on. Come on. Son of a-- Come on, work damn it.

Suddenly "chiseled" is on top of him. Shadow and all.

AIRPORT OFFICER
Problems?

KENNY
Oh, no, no, it's fine. The damn thing must be scratched again. I probably caught it with my keys. I'm always doing that, you know?

Kenny keeps sliding the card through. The officer noticing the SWEAT forming on the kid's pale forehead.

AIRPORT OFFICER
Can I see the card?

KENNY
What? Oh, yeah. Uh, sure. Let me just-- hold on a second. I just wanna get this.

More red lights. Almost staccato.

AIRPORT OFFICER
Okay, I'm gonna need to see--

BEEP! Green light. Kenny almost has a seizure. Just about managing to force a smile for the bull.

KENNY
Ah. There we go. Like I said, just a scratch. Must have nicked it with the keys. Like I said.

Kenny grabs the handle. A hand landing on the door. Holding it closed. The kid looks up. Frozen with fear.

AIRPORT OFFICER
You have a good day.

KENNY
Oh, yeah sure. You too.

The officer moves off. Kenny sags, quivering like jelly.

INT. CORRIDOR, AIRPORT - DAY

Alex and Sam peel off from a group of ASIAN SHUTTERBUGS. Heading down a second, empty hallway towards...

INT. RENOVATION AREA, AIRPORT - DAY

The two thieves step over a ROPE CORDON. Moving past some scattered ELECTRICAL TOOLS, PAINT CANS and SCAFFOLDING RIGS.

SAM
We're seven minutes behind.

ALEX
Not much we can do about that now.

SAM
I'm just saying, it's not too late. We can still back out.

ALEX
(obsessive)
Hey... we're doing this.

Suddenly they freeze... FOOTSTEPS. The duo scurry under a length of HANGING TARPAULIN.

Two clipboard-wielding SURVEYORS file through the section. Pointing at the walls. Talking indistinctly.

ALEX (CONT'D)
These things never go to plan.

SAM
They don't leave inside of five minutes, we're not gonna make it.

INT. BASEMENT, AIRPORT - DAY

Kenny wanders through the labyrinthine catacombs. Skirting a minefield of WHIRRING MACHINES and JANITORIAL SUPPLIES.

KENNY
(into earpiece)
I'm telling you, Marv. She's an absolute beauty. Perfect curves sliding down to the greatest ass you've ever seen, and she comes with 525 break horsepower too.

MARV (V.O.)
(over earpiece, filtered)
Well, that's what ya really want out of a woman. The ability to outperform five hundred horses.

Kenny stops. Backtracking to the right route. Still skittish.

KENNY
Hey, you don't get to crap on my dreams. At least, not until you have one I can crap on.

MARV (V.O.)
What the hell's the point of owning a car like that in the first place? Ya spend 200 grand on it, only to have some gobshite key the damn thing when you stop for a pint.

KENNY
I don't expect you to understand, Marv. You're not a mechanic. Where the hell is this--

The thief turns a corner. Arriving at a CAGED AREA containing industrial BANDS OF CABLES flowing down from the ceiling.

KENNY (CONT'D)
Ah. Okay. I'm at the cage.

INT. RENOVATION AREA, AIRPORT - DAY

Alex peeks under the tarpaulin. Catching a glimpse of the surveyors. Buried in a bureaucratic exchange.

SAM
We're gonna have to call it.

ALEX
Hold on. I've got an idea.

He crawls out the other side. Creeping up to some TINS OF PAINT resting on a SCAFFOLDING RIG. Gently lifting the edge.

The cans begin to roll. Picking up speed, until they tumble off the edge. Landing right on the closest surveyor's FEET.

SURVEYOR #1
Ow! God damn-- Son of a--

He hops about comically. Clutching a foot.

SURVEYOR #2
You alright?

SURVEYOR #1
Do I bloody look alright?

SURVEYOR #2
Come on, let's get it looked at.

The second surveyor takes him under the arm. Leads him away.

Sam emerges with a smile. Nice one. Alex drops to his knees. Tugging at the WORN CARPET.

INT. TERMINAL, AIRPORT - DAY

Marv heads for an isolated bench. Beaten by a FAT FAMILY laden down with SHOPPING, and half the food court.

KENNY (V.O.)
(over earpiece, filtered)
It's not asking a lot, you know. I mean, you must want something.

MARV
(into earpiece)
Ain't ya ever heard of privacy?

Marv surveys the lounge. Moving to a seat beside a window. He pulls a LAPTOP from his bag. Hits the power button.

KENNY (V.O.)
Come on, Marv. Quit holding out. I could use the distraction.

MARV
Why? Ya been getting scuttered on them pills again?

INT. BASEMENT, AIRPORT - DAY

Kenny hangs the PADLOCK on the frame of the now-opened cage. Child's play. He edges inside. Fiddling with the cables.

KENNY
(into earpiece, guarded)
We all have our ways of coping.

He unfolds an ANTENNA from within his HEADPHONE MUFFS. Sticking the MAGNETIZED BASE onto a nearby pipe.

Kenny pinches the HEADPHONE JACK. The tip parts. Revealing it to actually be a tiny CROCODILE CLIP.

MARV (V.O.)
(over earpiece, filtered)
It's getting worse, isn't it?

He ducks the question. Attaching the clip to the first cable.

KENNY
I'm ready. Let's start cycling.

INT. TERMINAL, AIRPORT - DAY

Marv sighs warily. Concerned.

The STATIC on his laptop suddenly vanishes. Replaced with LIVE PICTURES from a SECURITY CAMERA at a departure gate.

MARV
Next feed.

INT. RENOVATION AREA, AIRPORT - DAY

The carpet is now folded back. Alex grabs one of the POSTS from the rope cordon. Waiting for Sam's signal.

She checks the area. Gives him the nod. Alex pounds a HOLE into the floor with ease. Made in Britain.

INT. TERMINAL, AIRPORT - DAY

Different feeds scroll by on the laptop... endless corridors, waiting areas, elevators etc.

Marv pushes the beads of a ROSARY through his fingers. Part good luck charm, part diversion.

MARV
(into earpiece)
Whoa. Go back. Aye. That's it.

INT. RENOVATION AREA, AIRPORT - DAY

Sam anxiously slides down through the hole. Barely fitting into the dingy shaft below. Good thing she's slender.

ALEX
Sam. Just remember to breathe.

INT. TERMINAL, AIRPORT - DAY

Marv taps a few commands into the laptop. A complex CODE SEQUENCE flashes down the screen. Offers a "BEGIN" prompt.

MARV
(into earpiece)
Alright, Alex, we're good to go.

INT. EXHIBITION HALL, AIRPORT - DAY

Employing a minimalist look. TIMELESS ART held hostage by a punishing blend of grey walls and glass DISPLAY CASES.

Several TOURISTS wander around. Examining the paintings with mild interest. They came to fly.

Alex edges toward the centerpiece. Seduced by the glittering array of JEWELS encrusting the GOLD CROWN.

ALEX
(into earpiece)
Okay, Sam. Let's show them what England's all about...

INT. SHAFT, AIRPORT - DAY

Darkness. Traces of light bleeding through fragile CEILING PANELS beneath Sam's hands. A thirty foot drop below.

She squirms along the narrow crawl-space. Dodging clusters of DUSTY COBWEBS and HANGING CABLES.

In position, she forces open a VALVE on a LONG PIPE running parallel to her. A WHOOSHING SOUND...

INT. EXHIBITION HALL, AIRPORT - DAY

SPRINKLERS unleash a TORRENT OF WATER on the unsuspecting tourists. Ear-splitting ALARMS accompanying the deluge.

ALEX
(into earpiece)
Now.

INSERT: Marv hits a key on his laptop. Live camera feeds instantly replaced with STATIC.

MARV (V.O.)
(over earpiece, filtered)
Go.

Alex drops to the floor. Sliding under the display case. He opens an ACCESS PANEL, exposing a KEYPAD and LED SCREEN.

He reaches for a SMALL CABLE in his pocket. Attaches it to an ACCESS PORT on the LED screen. Fingers moving like lightning.

INSERT: Marv watches another set of SECURITY FEEDS. GUARDS racing towards the exhibition hall.

MARV
(into earpiece)
Okay, here come the peelers. Ya got forty seconds, boyo.

Alex inserts the cable into the base of his SMARTPHONE. Taps an APP ICON. A blinding flurry of integers dash past.

The numbers condense into a FOUR DIGIT SEQUENCE... except, the code is FIVE DIGITS. Shit!

MARV (V.O.)
Twenty seconds, Alex.

Alex hits on an idea. HUFFS on the LED display. FINGERPRINTS appear. ONE NUMBER DIFFERENT than the rest of the sequence.

He punches the code in. Praying...

CORNER CATCHES snap free. The display case swinging open. Access granted to its twinkling treasure.

MARV (V.O.)
Ten seconds. Time to scarper.

Alex jumps to his feet. Swapping the real crown with the replica. He shuts the case. Throwing the crown into his bag.

He swings the bag over his shoulder. Escaping round a corner just as the GUARDS burst in. Down to the wire.

They breathe a sigh of relief. The “crown” still in place.

AIRPORT GUARD
(into radio)
We’re clear. Stand down alert.
Let’s get maintenance up here.

INT. DEPARTURES, AIRPORT - DAY

A host of PASSENGERS stream out of the transit lounge. Sauntering, jogging, running for their gates.

Alex coasts into the fray. Tossing his WET JACKET into the TRASH RECEPTACLE of a janitor’s CART.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
This is the final boarding call for flight BA-0157 to Kuwait City. All remaining passengers please head immediately to gate forty three.

INSERT: Marv packs up his laptop. Rises to his feet.

Marv joins Alex, walking steadily.

INSERT: Sam exits the hole. Strips off her outer layer of DIRTY CLOTHES. Throws them in. Restoring the carpet.

Sam connects with Alex and Marv. Hearts racing as they near their getaway vehicle... a Boeing 747.

INSERT: Kenny reassembles his headphones. Locks the cage.

Kenny meets up with the trio. Marv passing him a JACKET to hide the top of his maintenance uniform.

INT. GATE, AIRPORT - DAY

The quartet calmly hand PASSPORTS and TICKETS to the AIR STEWARDESS. All smiles. Pleasantries even.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

The team board the aircraft. Taking their seats just as the doors are closed. Done and dusted.

KENNY
Looks like we made it, huh?

Kenny fiddles with the incline of his seat. Struggles with the BELT. Losing his temper.

MARV
Ya, aside from a six hour flight... what the hell are ya doing?

KENNY
Huh? Oh, it's this damn seat. I can't get it to recline! I swear, could these things be any more badly designed?!

Nearby PASSENGERS glance at them. Marv raising an apologetic hand. Disturbed by the sight of Kenny's shaking limbs.

MARV
(assisting him)
Jaysus, ya really aren't the full shilling, are ya?

Kenny leans back. Shuts his eyes. Embarrassed.

INT. GATE, AIRPORT - DAY

Stone watches the DEPARTING PLANE. Cracking a sly smile as he dials his cellphone. Smug bastard.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY (TRAVELING)

Alex passes Sam a FLUTE OF CHAMPAGNE. Confident enough to celebrate. Unease draining from his face.

ALEX
Here we go. To the greatest crew a king could ask for.

SAM
And to never having to steal again.

The CLINK is somewhat lackluster. Alex lives for it.

SAM (CONT'D)
You can say it, you know. That it didn't feel right...

Alex shifts awkwardly in his seat.

SAM (CONT'D)
It's okay, really. We both know it should've been her with you.

ALEX
Hey. You did great, and that's all that matters.

Sam feigns a smile. No more convinced than we are.

STEWARDESS (O.S.)
Would you like a paper?

Alex shakes his head. As Sam reaches for it, her sleeve pulls back to reveal a TATTOO on her wrist - a knight on a horse.

ALEX
You know, I've always wondered why you got that. You never really struck me as the sort.

SAM
(uncomfortable)
Yeah, well, if I were to tell you why it's there, you'd think I was stupid.

ALEX
You just stole a crown worth twelve million, Sam. The last thing I'd ever call you is stupid.

Alex fires off that disarming smile. Sweetening it.

SAM
I got it for Kenny. See when he took me out of... that place. Well, he was kinda like... you know.

He takes her hand. Reassuring.

ALEX
You don't have to worry anymore, Sam. None of us do.

INSERT: The plane lands on the runway.

KENNY
I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm ready to get this done.

ALEX
Don't worry, Ken. One more hour the crown will be sold, and we'll all be celebrating.

MARV
Some celebration it'll be. Closest alcohol's a hundred miles away.

ALEX
Well, I guess it'll be your liver that's celebrating.

The doors open. Their blood running cold as a squad of INTERPOL OFFICERS calmly step onto the plane. Shit!

Alex stares holes into them. Betrayed.

FADE TO:

The familiar grey skies of England.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

A soul-crushing fortress of STONE WALLS, CONCERTINA WIRE and GUARD TOWERS. No illusions here. This place is hard time.

INT. GYMNASIUM, PRISON - DAY

Thick with sweat and gorged muscle. A house built on pain.

An eclectic gang of INMATES form a circle. Herding two half-naked GLADIATORS in their midst.

The warriors hammer each other. Trading blows with equal resolve. Raw and brutal, in spite of the BOXING GLOVES.

A WHISTLE is blown. Both fighters collapsing in an exhausted heap. The GUARDS move in. Emptying the gym with their BATONS.

PRISON GUARD
Not you, Reynolds. Ya've got a visitor. Clear it out!

He's talking to ONE OF THE FIGHTERS. A barely recognizable Alex. Now sporting a GRIZZLED BEARD and BITTER EYES.

Seconds later, Alex is alone... SLOW CLAPPING. He spins. Locking sights on the corporate FIGURE approaching him.

GRAHAM
Quite a performance. Almost makes me wish I'd put a bet down.

Meet GRAHAM BEDFORD, fifties. A corner-office asshole driven solely by greed. Someone you'd just love to push off a roof.

ALEX
Who the hell are you?

GRAHAM
Graham Bedford. Atlantic Insurance.

Alex pulls off a glove. A hint of a smile filtering through his BLOODIED STUBBLE.

ALEX
You guys must really be scraping the barrel, huh?

The suit holds steady. Guarding his hand.

GRAHAM
We pursue all lines of inquiry.

ALEX
Well, you took your sweet time getting here. How long's it been... nine months since the crown was stolen again? Twice in a year. That's gotta sting, huh?

Graham reaches for SOMETHING in his pocket. A modest shift in his demeanor. Less silver spoon.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Well, regardless, it's not gone through any of the major trades, otherwise even you would have heard something. Auctions are too risky on such a high profile item, which means it's probably still in the country. Most likely in the hands of a private collector.

Alex turns his attention to the second glove.

GRAHAM
Here, let me give you a hand.

Graham suddenly kicks Alex's legs out. Forcing a CONCEALED BLADE to his throat. The suit's eyes now wild.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
You think this is my first dance? I've spent years hunting your kind, and I know exactly how this game is played. So let's cut out the crap.

Alex struggles fruitlessly. Graham pinning him securely.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
I want my crown back, and thanks to this exorbitant release form...

Graham retrieves an ENVELOPE from his jacket. Dangling it in front of Alex like a manila carrot.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
... you are going to get it for me.

ALEX
You expect me to betray another thief for you? Piss off!

The suit pushes harder on the knife. Drawing fresh BLOOD.

GRAHAM
It seems you're a little hard of hearing, Mr. Reynolds. Now, I would be more than willing to clean your ears out with my friend here, but clearly that would take time...

The gym doors swing open with a clang. GUARDS approaching.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
And it seems we're almost out, so I'm gonna boil this down. I know what you are, and I know that you want this. So get out there, get even, and get me my crown back!

PRISON GUARD
Alwight, that's enough.

The guards struggle to separate them. Graham still jostling. Coveting the control.

GRAHAM
Three weeks, Mr. Reynolds. Don't disappoint me.

Graham throws an icy smile. Alex left reeling.

EXT. PRISON - DAY (RAINING)

Alex is shoved onto the street by a cruel-looking GUARD. One last indignity from Her Majesty's prison service.

PRISON GUARD
Piss off!

The guard heads back inside. Slamming the gate closed.

Alex dusts himself off. Retrieving the guard's WALLET from under his armpit. He pockets the money. Tosses the wallet.

EXT. THEATER - DAY

Just outside the West End. Crowded with aspiring artists in desperate need of a paycheck... like me.

Alex climbs out a cab. Passing a generous TIP to the INDIAN DRIVER. He stares up at the tall, Victorian building.

INT. AUDITORIUM, THEATER - DAY

Mid-sized. Elegant. Somewhere magic happens. Right now, it's empty though. In rehearsal mode.

STAGE HANDS prep the area as two OPERA SINGERS practise a scene from *The Marriage of Figaro*.

INT. BOX, THEATER - DAY

The OWNER of the establishment watches the performance with a serene expression. Alex takes a seat beside him.

Meet FRANKIE, sixties. Wealthy and wise. The sort who's done it all, and now spends his time on other forms of artistry.

FRANKIE
How was prison?

ALEX
Well, I won't be opening a laundrette any time soon.

Frankie gestures towards a TRAY OF APPETIZERS beside them.

FRANKIE
You want something? The gravlax is pretty good.

ALEX
I already ate.

Frankie assembles some salmon on a crisp bread. Adds a garnish of capers and sauce.

FRANKIE
Leon won't tell me what he puts in the sauce. I'm worth almost seventy million yet I can't convince my own steward to part with his dill and mustard recipe. There's definitely an irony in there somewhere.

ALEX
You want me to steal it for you?

FRANKIE
I may be retired, but I'm not at that stage yet.

ALEX
And here was I thinking old age might have slowed you down.

Frankie studies his protege. Pleasantries fading.

FRANKIE
Speaking of age, if memory serves, you got yourself fifteen years.

ALEX
I had a visitor.

INT. GREENHOUSE, THEATER - DAY

Situated on the roof. Filled with SPLICED ROSES, all lovingly tended. A welcome refuge from the London frenzy.

Frankie constructs his latest creation with a GRAFTING KNIFE. Alex sits on a nearby stool. Shaving with an ELECTRIC RAZOR.

FRANKIE
You follow the markets inside?

ALEX
It wasn't exactly a priority.

Frankie checks his work. Testing the stalk.

FRANKIE
Atlantic's in the toilet. Stock's fallen sixty percent in the last two months. You don't have to be a trader to know what that means.

ALEX
They're going under.
(shutting the razor off)
Which will free them of their insurance obligations. Son of a--
This isn't about avoiding a payout.
The bastard intends to sell it.

Alex lowers his head. Burning quietly. Played.

FRANKIE
And recover his losses. Plus if things get too hot, he can just pass it on to its owner. No one would be the wiser.

ALEX
I didn't see it, Frankie.

Frankie moves a small BAG OF COMPOST aside. Finds a seat.

FRANKIE
But you took the job anyway.

Alex doesn't answer. Stung.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
(with deep regret)
I made a decision once that cost us both dearly. I don't want to see you repeating my mistake.

ALEX
I appreciate your concern, but I don't have a choice. This guy's a psycho, Frankie. You gotta help me.

FRANKIE
So, you want me to betray a thief too? Break the rules I taught you?

He lowers his knife. A deep sadness in his weathered eyes.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
You know, a few weeks back, I met up with an old friend. We stopped at a cafe. I ordered a cup of Earl Grey. Know what the waitress said to me? We don't serve English tea.
(beat)
This country's changed. Now it seems our profession has too.

Alex stares at his mentor. Feeling small.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
I owe you, kid. So I'll help you find him, but on one condition.

Alex tenses. Sensing what's coming. Antsy.

ALEX
You can't ask me to do that. It's not her problem.

FRANKIE
Don't be naive. Bedford's the sort who's gonna cast as wide a net as he can. Besides, you need her.

ALEX
She'll never do it, Frankie.

Frankie pats Alex's knee. Genuine love.

FRANKIE
If I taught you anything, it's the art of persuasion.

INT. OFFICE, ADOPTION AGENCY - NIGHT

A sliver of light pierces the gloom, briefly revealing a POSTER for child adoption. A nimble THIEF slips past.

She deposits an APPLICANT FORM on a desk. Moving toward a corner SAFE. Working the tumblers.

A HAND reaches for the form. Studies the details.

ALEX (O.S.)
Bit desperate isn't it?

The thief whirls. Rips off her BALACLAVA.

Meet LISA, thirties. A mixed-race (French-Algerian) fighter with the brain to match. Tough-as-nails, but with a good soul.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I mean I know you really want one, but still.

Lisa snatches the form. Clocks him square in the jaw.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(shaking it off)
Okay, I guess I deserved that.

She slugs him again. No passion behind it. Just ice.

LISA
(French slipping through when angry)
Cochon!

ALEX
Jesus, Lis. You made your point!

LISA
Get out.

ALEX
What, and miss the chance to lose some teeth?

Lisa stares daggers. Considers hitting him again. Screw it. She came for the safe... Alex adjusts his jaw.

ALEX (CONT'D)
That's quite a recommendation you gave yourself. You don't think you might have overdone it?

LISA
We're not doing this.

Alex takes a step closer. Watching her work.

ALEX
You clocked me twice, Lis. Least you could do is ask why I'm here.

LISA
Is it stalking?

She moves to the next tumbler. Getting close.

ALEX
I don't have time for that.

LISA
How I missed hearing those words.

Alex notices her WEDDING RING as she reaches for the handle. Smiles a little. CLUNK! The safe opens... EMPTY.

ALEX
Oh... guess they must have already sent them off, huh?

Lisa locks the safe. Fighting to conceal her dismay.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Well, since you're not busy, do you think we could talk?

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - NIGHT

Somewhere near Covent Garden. Packed with PEOPLE enjoying ethnic BUSKERS and dazzling PERFORMERS. Mardi Gras UK-style.

Alex and Lisa stride through the colorful noise. Swerving round a BLACK DUDE charming a MINI SAXOPHONE.

ALEX
You know, I gotta say, this isn't exactly what I had in mind.

LISA
Now you know how it feels.

They dodge a couple of JUGGLERS tossing ASSORTED FRUIT.

ALEX
You think we could slow down? It's not like we're training for a race.

LISA
You wanna stop, go right ahead.

Alex darts in front of her. Forming a wall.

ALEX
Okay. You're pissed. Fine. I get it, but I didn't come here just for the sake of it. We need to talk.

Lisa gauges his sincerity. Relenting a smidge.

LISA
You've got two minutes.

They seize a bench left by some vacating DRINKERS. Study each other. It's uncomfortable.

LISA (CONT'D)
Eh bien?

ALEX
Just give me a second, alright?! I wasn't exactly planning to do this on the fly.

LISA
Quit stalling, Alex. What are you involved in?

Lisa shoots him a piercing stare. No bullshit.

ALEX
It's complicated.

LISA
Quelle surprise.

ALEX
Look, forgive me for saying this, but I'm the one who ended up serving time, so how come it's me that's in the dog house?

LISA
You really are a piece of work. You think being behind bars for a year has changed what happened?

Alex avoids her gaze. Coward switch flicked.

ALEX
It wasn't one-sided.

LISA
Bullshit. You ran away, and we both know why. You'd have had to put all this aside, and you didn't want any part of that. But you know what? That's fine, because I don't want any part of this.

She rises with conviction. Alex reacts. Fighting to save it.

ALEX
Okay. Okay. Look, I'm sorry for what happened, alright? But people make mistakes.
(beat)
Look, I know we need to talk about this, but we can't do it right now. There are bigger things going on, and they affect all of us.

An incredulous scowl forms on Lisa's face. Betrayed.

LISA
Let me get this straight, you've been out what a few days, and already our lives are in danger?

ALEX
Lisa...

She slaps him hard. Shaking with intensity.

LISA
You know, I actually believed that maybe time inside could change you. How stupid am I?

ALEX
Lisa, wait.

Alex grabs her arm. She casts it aside. Barely holding back.

LISA
No! We're done, Alex. *C'est fini*.

Lisa yanks off her WEDDING RING. Driving it into his hand. Leaving before he can see her TEARS.

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT (TRAVELING)

Alex collapses onto the backseat. Looking like hell.

ALEX
Wingate Road.

The opposite passenger door opens. A second MAN steps inside. Wearing a familiar, nauseating smile.

STONE
Alex.

INSERT: The taxi pulls into traffic. Moving off.

ALEX
Give me one good reason why I shouldn't kill you right now.

STONE
Don't need reason. Go ahead.

Stone opens his jacket. Revealing a GUN. Alex stares at him, gauging. The snake's serious. He's not... yet.

STONE (CONT'D)
This why you lose. You not prepared go whole way.

ALEX
I'm working up to it.

STONE
Good, else endeavor very dull.

ALEX
Are you enjoying this? Tormenting me? Sending me to prison. Is that how you get off?

STONE
You ask wrong question. What you need wonder, is who responsible.

Alex hits back. Sure of himself. Blindly so.

ALEX
You made your choice, Stone.

STONE
Yes, I make choice, but who make choice for me?

Alex shrinks away from it. Unsettled.

The taxi slows. Caught in the busy London TRAFFIC. Stone using the opportunity to make an exit.

EXT. PRISON - DAWN

The same sinister tomb our hero was held in.

Alex watches a sedan pull into the parking lot. Two career PRISON GUARDS emerge. Cockney shift workers earning shag all.

SKINNY GUARD
You ‘avin a laugh? Three Latvians, a Romanian and a Croat?

PORTLY GUARD
Sign of the times.

SKINNY GUARD
Never fought I’d miss the day when English prisons had English crooks.

Alex bumps into PORTLY. Slipping a PHONE in his COAT POCKET.

PORTLY GUARD
You see that? Didn’t even bloody stop. I tell ya, there ain’t no respect left in this damn country.

INT. SECURITY STATION, PRISON - DAWN

A greasy DESK SERGEANT buzzes the guards inside. He’s the sort who eats TV dinners all the time and doesn’t care.

DESK SERGEANT
You’re late.

PORTLY GUARD
Blame the clutch. He can't get the damn fing to stay in gear.

SKINNY GUARD
Bloody modern cars. I never shoulda got rid of my Morris fousand. That car never went wrong. Not once.

DESK SERGEANT
Quit yer yapping. Get to work.

The guards hang up their coats. Arguing as they walk through the METAL DETECTORS leading into the building.

The sergeant files papers. Oblivious to the tendril of SMOKE rising from one of the coat pockets.

As the BASE SHRIVELS, the phone slides out.

Hearing the clatter, the sergeant rises. Picking up the phone with a frown. No clue which coat it came from.

INT. TRANSIT VAN - DAWN

Darkness. Alex bathed in the neon glow of a LAPTOP SCREEN. He glances at his watch. Hits the "ENTER" key.

INT. SECURITY STATION, PRISON - DAWN

The sergeant places the phone on the counter. Waddling back through the metal detector.

As he heads for the lost and found drawer, a NEEDLE stabs out the phone's casing. Pricking the sergeant's hand.

He drops the phone. Letting out a cry. BLOOD trickling over the floor as he searches for a tissue.

PANELS slide open on the corners of the phone. Tiny WHEELS popping out. Raising it up... this ain't no phone.

INT. TRANSIT VAN - DAWN

A HIDDEN CAMERA buried in the headphone jack relays a FEED to Alex's laptop. He guides the "CAR" with the arrow keys.

INT. SECURITY STATION, PRISON - DAWN

The phone rolls forward. Racing through the security station. A mischievous display, bordering on cute.

INT. TRANSIT VAN - DAWN

Alex verifies his route using the phone's GPS chip. The car's position laid over a DIGITAL BLUEPRINT of the prison.

INT. CORRIDORS, PRISON - DAWN

The phone approaches the MAIN CONTROL CENTER.

An antenna rises from the side of the casing. Aiming for the SECURITY CAMERA stationed above the LOCKED DOOR.

A BEAM OF LIGHT erupts from it. Overwhelming the camera. The phone quickly scurries under a chair.

INT. CONTROL CENTER, PRISON - DAWN

Banks of TELEVISION MONITORS relay wave after wave of LOCKED CELLS and EMPTY CORRIDORS. Big Brother minus the thrill.

Two bemused GUARDS observe the hail of STATIC airing on one of the displays. Scratching their heads.

TALL GUARD
What the hell?

SHORT GUARD
It's not a system glitch.

SHORTY presses the INTERCOM BUTTON on his CONSOLE.

SHORT GUARD (CONT'D)
Patrol seven. We have a camera malfunction outside the control center. Let's do a perimeter check.

INT. CORRIDORS, PRISON - DAWN

An old PRISON GUARD wanders down the hall. Mentally ticking off the days till his pension kicks in.

OLD GUARD
(on his radio)
Copy that, control. I'm outside the door. You're all clear.

Shorty steps out. Examining the camera with his colleague as the phone quietly sneaks inside.

INT. CONTROL CENTER, PRISON - DAWN

The phone skirts behind a DESKTOP PC sitting beneath a desk. Backing its CONNECTION PORT onto the I/O BOARD.

RECORDS whiz by on the phone's screen. Drilling down to a PRISONER TRANSFER LIST. Names changing...

FADE TO:

INT. CELL BLOCK, PRISON - DAY

Same as any other pokey. Concrete, steel and despair.

SIRENS blare as TWO CELL DOORS slide open. The GUARDS toss SHACKLES to a pair of confused prisoners - Marv and Kenny.

PRISON GUARD
Well, what the hell are you waiting for? A cup of tea? Let's get a move on. We ain't got all day.

The thieves exchange glances. Playing along.

EXT. EXERCISE YARD, PRISON - DAY

An armored PRISON BUS trundles over the well-trodden yard. Many gloomy miles walked here.

One of the TWO BUS GUARDS disembarks. Verifying paperwork with the insipid PRISON CAPTAIN.

Marv and Kenny hover with their MINDERS. A female GUARD herding a shackled Sam out of the WOMEN'S COMPOUND.

KENNY
(whispering)
Hey. Long time, no see.

Kenny is considerably calmer than before. The constant fidgeting and trembling hands no longer apparent.

SAM
Yeah. What's going on?

KENNY
Hell if I know.

Marv's eyes narrow. Perhaps sensing the truth.

The second bus guard waves them forward. Checking names on his clipboard. Testing their restraints.

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY

The thieves board the bus. Scrutinized by the bearded BLACK DRIVER. Something about him seems a little off.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The prison bus rockets along the deserted country road. TWO PATROL CARS leading the way. Providing escort.

INSERT: The bus driver hits a button on his CELLPHONE.

A row of SPIKE STRIPS snap out across the length of the road. Unable to stop in time, the two cruisers plow through them.

The vehicles tumble. Sparks and shrapnel flying. A whirlwind of TWISTED METAL and SHREDDED RUBBER.

The bus driver slams on the brakes. Clouds of WHITE SMOKE rising from the SCREAMING TIRES.

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY

The guards rush forward. Horrified by the sight of the WARPED WRECKAGE lying just ahead of them. They glance at the driver.

BUS GUARD #1
Stay here.

They grab SHOTGUNS. Disembark.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The guards edge toward the smashed cruisers. Checking for any possible sign of ambush. Hackles raised.

BUS GUARD #2
Jerry? Paul? You alwight?

The chorus of moans is pretty definitive. Hell no.

BUS GUARD #1
Get on the horn. We’re gonna need ambulances out here sharpish.

They spin as the prison bus roars. Careening round the strip of spikes. Making a break for it.

The guards futilely fire their weapons at the REINFORCED CHASSIS. They'd have done better throwing them.

INT. PRISON BUS - DAY (TRAVELING)

The driver reaches up. Ripping a FAKE BEARD and WIG off his head. Rubbing the BLACKFACE away... it's Alex.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

A junk yard crammed into a storage locker. Anything a thief could ever want is in here. Good luck finding it though.

Lisa fiddles with the isolated door of a SAFE. Studying the dynamics and arrangement of the TUMBLERS.

She opens the safe door. Frankie standing behind it. Almost giving her a heart attack.

LISA
Merde! Sixty seven years old and you still move like a ghost.

FRANKIE
Sixty eight, but who's counting?

Lisa resumes her work. Tinkering with a tiny SCREWDRIVER.

LISA
I'm not doing it, Frankie. Whatever it is, he's gonna have to sort it out himself.

Frankie wanders. Retrieving her APPLICATION FORM. It sits on a table beside a FRAMED PHOTO of Lisa in a STREET GANG.

FRANKIE
You sound just like your mother.

LISA
That's called stealing, you know.

He smiles coyly. Passes her the form.

FRANKIE
How is it someone as dedicated as you ends up being rejected?

Lisa glances toward the framed photo. Regret in her eyes.

LISA
Dedication doesn't count for much when you have a criminal record.

FRANKIE
Well, at the risk of being crude, why not just go to the bank?

She lowers the screwdriver. A moment of honesty.

LISA
He left me, Frankie. I wanted to find someone in the same boat.

FRANKIE
You have a big heart, kid. That's why he needs you.

Frankie finds a REMOTE under some trash. Turns on a PORTABLE TELEVISION. A NEWS REPORT of the prison break is airing.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
That's why they need you.

Lisa stares at the TV. Turning bitter.

LISA
C'est amusant. You sound just like him, Frankie.

FRANKIE
One more chance, Lis. That's all I'm asking.

Frankie hands her the remote, leaving. Lisa tosses it. Sinking back in her seat.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

The remains of an old packing plant. DUSTY CRATES scattered about. Colonies of MOULD. Pretty much pneumonia central.

WHAM! Alex receives yet another punch to his jaw. Kenny wrestling with him.

MARV
Hey! That's enough!

Marv forces the brawlers apart.

KENNY
The hell it is, Marv! I'm not gonna let him screw us again!

Infuriated by Alex's treachery, Kenny moves in again. Fists clenched. Set for round two.

MARV
I said, that's enough! Now, ya walk it off! Else it'll be me throwing the fists around here.

The intensity in Marv's eyes is just enough to make Kenny think twice. He storms out. Filled with rage.

MARV (CONT'D)
Sam, go with him.

Sam follows Kenny. Too overwhelmed to speak.

MARV (CONT'D)
Ya've got us into a right fecking pickle here, Alex, and ya deserved everything he threw at ya.

Alex spits a globule of BLOOD on the floor. Pride trashed.

ALEX
Believe me, I didn't expect them to just roll over.

He leans against a crate. Nursing his busted lip.

MARV
What makes ya think I have?

ALEX
You're smart enough to know that's not an option.

MARV
Is that supposed to mean something? The old Irishman knows the game, so he'll carry the banner. Is that it?

Alex looks at him. Marv refusing to budge. Not this time.

ALEX
I don't have to explain myself. I'm trying to keep us alive.

MARV
The feck ya are! This ain't about us. This is vanity. He took ya crown and ya want it back. Like some jealous little snapper, and that is the only reason we're here.

ALEX
Bedford--

MARV
I don't wanna hear it, Alex! This feud of yars has already taken a year from us. We lose this time, it won't be a cell we'll be going back to, it'll be a hole in the ground!

Alex avoids his gaze. Taken to the woodshed.

ALEX
You gonna bail on me?

MARV
Ya sure as hell deserve it, but like ya said, I'm smart enough to know it ain't an option.
(beat, sour)
They need time with this, Alex. Time without ya.

Marv strides out. Alex left with only the fungus for company.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

The old building sits at the end of a disused quay. RUSTED BOATS strewn about the languid site. Left to decline.

Alex walks along the dock, blending seamlessly. His cellphone suddenly chimes.

ALEX
(into phone)
Yeah?

GRAHAM (V.O.)
(over phone, filtered)
Nice job on the prison break.

ALEX
How'd you get this number?

INT. BROTHEL - DAY

Dark and secretive. A haven for the "exotic".

Graham reclines on a sofa with naught but a ROBE to preserve his dignity. He teases a YOUNG BOY with his knife.

GRAHAM
(into phone)
I'd say you've got bigger things to worry about than that.

Graham traces circles on the child's skinny chest. The poor kid barely into his teens.

ALEX (V.O.)
(over phone, filtered)
Yeah, like being watched.

GRAHAM
Oh, believe me, I'm doing a lot more than just watching.

Graham slides a hand behind the boy's head. Guiding it toward his crotch. Leaning back with an offensive grin.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Sixteen days left, Mr. Reynolds. Time to get started.

EXT. WATERFRONT - DAY

Marv ambles down the shore. Finding Sam sitting on a rock, absently watching London's garbage journey past.

MARV
Not exactly Fiji, is it? That's where ya were going, right? After we sold the crown?

SAM
Yeah, but it's not so bad here. Better than in there anyway.

MARV
Well, fair play to ya for looking on the bright side.

Marv stands beside her. A lone SEAGULL squawking nearby.

MARV (CONT'D)
You know, it's strange, but every time I see this place it reminds me of home. Me father used to moor his boat in a river just like this one. Gosh when I think back to those days. It's miracle the damn thing even floated. The only thing holding it up was the barnacles.

Sam glances at him. Marv reflecting on something deep.

SAM
Never thought of you as a fisherman.

MARV
The old man was the angler. I was just... along for the ride.

SAM
Kinda like us, huh?

Marv is silent. Equally adrift.

SAM (CONT'D)
It's funny. When we were inside, the only thing I wanted was to get out. Now, I sorta wish I hadn't.

MARV
(shrugging)
It's easier inside. Ya don't have to sweat ya noodle.

SAM
Twenty hours a day in a cell? It's all I did. Figured I'd finally have time to work out how he does it.

He throws her a playful smile. Hoping to lighten things.

MARV
Oh... looking to move up, are ya?

SAM
No, I just thought maybe if I could see it, I wouldn't worry next time.

MARV
Ya want some advice? Let him do the worrying. We got more than enough on our plate as it is anyhow.

Sam contemplates this. Finds herself nodding.

SAM
You're right. I guess we just have to trust him. We owe him that much.

The naive kid heads up the shore. Falsely assured.

Marv leans wearily against the rock. Punches it hard. Disgusted with his deceitful behavior.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE - DAY

Snooty PATRONS wander through the vibrant hall. Scrutinizing the liberal selection of PAINTINGS, FURNITURE and TRINKETS.

Alex picks his way through the crowded exhibits. Approaching Lisa. She holds a PROGRAM. Studying the displays.

ALEX
Do you have a problem with us meeting in a quiet spot?

LISA
You wanted to talk, fine, but it's not gonna stop me working.

An expensive NECKLACE is sold. Lisa scratching a number down as the eccentric AUCTIONEER hammers his GAVEL.

ALEX
So, you planning on going after the whole catalogue, or is it just a few favorites?

LISA
We're not here to chat, Alex.

Alex edges closer. Turning on the charm.

ALEX
Hey, I'm just trying to be civil.

LISA
Casse-toi! This is just a ploy. A way for you to get what you want.

ALEX
You think us fighting all the time is what I want?

LISA
To be honest, I don't really care.

ALEX
If that's true, why didn't you just hang up on me?

She stops dead. Facing him. Stern as hell.

LISA
Because, it's not just about you anymore. We're all in it now.

A POLICE OFFICER providing extra security spots the two of them talking. Reaches for his SMARTPHONE.

ALEX
Look, I get that you're angry. I really do, but I don't have time to go twelve rounds with you. So quit tossing up walls. Just tell me what you want from me?

LISA
Well, you could start by saying it wasn't just some scheme. That it actually meant something.

ALEX
Would you even believe me if I said that? Or are we past honesty too?

They fall silent. Tangled up.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. Look, maybe we should just--

LISA
What? Spend the next two weeks in silence till we're dead?

ALEX
No one's gonna die.

LISA
You can't have it both ways, Alex. Sooner or later you're gonna have to decide. Him, or us.

The police officer receives a download of Alex's MUGSHOT on his phone. Instantly advancing on them.

ALEX
Christ. Can this day get any worse?

Lisa spots the copper. Rolling her eyes. Muttering.

LISA
Pourquoi n'ai-je me lève ce matin?
(English)
Why did I get up this morning?

POLICE OFFICER
Hold it right there.

They bolt. The officer breaks into a run. Pursuing them.

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY

The thieves burst outside. Forcing their way through a crowd of startled FACES.

The throng thickens into a blockage. They dart left. Rocket across a road. Narrowly missed by the TRAFFIC.

POLICE OFFICER
(into radio)
In pursuit of suspects heading into Brompton Road. Requesting backup.

Alex and Lisa tear down an ALLEY. Dead end. They spin. Climb over a BOLTED GATE. The officer hot on their tail.

The thieves exit the alley. Consider their choices. Cover in short supply. Alex points to their right.

ALEX
There. Inside.

The two of them sprint toward the entrance of an extravagant DEPARTMENT STORE. Maybe Harrods.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

The SECURITY GUARD on the entrance sees them hurtling towards him. Fuzz right behind. He moves to intervene.

Bad idea. Alex collides with him. Subduing the rent-a-cop with a couple of well-placed punches. The duo lunge inside.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Alex and Lisa bolt through the labyrinth of luxury goods. Weaving between the aisles. Unable to shake their pursuer.

SECURITY GUARDS converge from all directions. Herding the thieves deeper into the store. Wolves on the hunt.

A burly guard reaches them. Alex throws a left hook. Misses. Lisa ducks. Taking out the guard’s legs. Pushing Alex on.

The thieves swerve round some middle-aged WOMEN perusing bras. The ladies scream. Backing away from them.

Alex drives Lisa toward a set of DOORS marked private. The two thieves crashing into the back of the store.

INT. STOCKROOM, DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Alex and Lisa dive through the JUNGLE OF BOXES. Vaulting the smaller packages. Knocking over MANNEQUINS.

Security GUARDS stumble over the debris. The lead trips over. Sending the rest of them tumbling. A pileup.

The thieves head for some stairs. Climbing to the roof. The trailing police officer spots them. Follows.

EXT. ROOF, DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Alex and Lisa explode outside. Panting. No time to catch their breath. The copper is still on their tail.

The thieves sprint along the haphazard roof. Dodging several commercial air conditioning UNITS.

They reach the ledge. Facing the dizzying drop. They spin. The officer closing them down.

ALEX
We have to jump.

LISA
What the hell do you mean jump?!

ALEX
There. The scaffolding.

Alex points to a shaky collection of PIPES AND PLANKS below and to their left. The fall just about manageable.

LISA
No way.

ALEX
You got a better idea?

The copper is almost on them. No choice. They jump...

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY

Tumbling through the air... the falling thieves land on the scaffolding with a thud.

Lisa slips. Rolls over the side. Alex reacts. Grabs her arm. Dangling above the streets.

The copper leaps onto the scaffolding. Determined.

Alex pulls Lisa up. Spins to engage the officer. Both men peppering each other with fists and kicks.

Lisa swings down to the next level. Accidentally kicking out one of the main SUPPORT BRACKETS.

LISA
Pas bon.

She grabs onto one of the posts. The tower of wood and metal buckling. Beginning to wobble.

Alex and the copper roll as the structure tumbles over onto the street. Crashing on top of two arriving POLICE CRUISERS.

Lisa yanks Alex to his feet. The duo wading through the DUST CLOUD left by the field of SPLINTERED PLANKS and BENT PIPES.

The copper rises out of the pile of debris behind them. Still in the fight. A machine.

ALEX
You gotta be kidding.

LISA
Come on, the tube.

Lisa points to the TUBE STATION just up ahead. They break into a run. The officer following suit.

INT. TUBE STATION - DAY

The thieves race through the bustling station. Skirting COMMUTERS. Bolting down ESCALATORS. Vaulting TURNSTILES.

INT. PLATFORM, TUBE STATION - DAY

PASSENGERS disembark from a TRAIN. Alex and Lisa fighting through them. Boarding just as the doors close.

The officer collides with the doors. Smacking them with his hand as the train rockets away into the UNDERGROUND TUNNELS.

INT. TUBE TRAIN - DAY (TRAVELING)

The exhausted thieves grab hold of the hand rails. Hot and sweaty. Gasping for breath.

LISA
What the hell have you gotten me into, Alex?

Alex is unable to answer. Still reeling.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Kenny jams some clothes into a BAG. Sam approaches. Jittery.

SAM
You're leaving?

KENNY
It's not what we signed up for.

SAM
This isn't like before, Ken. You can't just run away from it.

KENNY
Yeah? Watch me.

SAM
Kenny, please. Listen to me. You're not thinking this through.

Kenny slams his fists down on the bag. Tormented.

KENNY
The hell I'm not! I just scare you because I question him. It's easier for you to say I don't think right. That I'm having an attack. That I need more pills. God forbid I have a thought of my own.

He continues stuffing the bag. Sam chastised.

SAM
Where will you go? Back to the streets? Or to your father? So he can hit you again?

KENNY
I'll figure something out.

Sam leans in. Rests a hand on his arm.

SAM
He'll kill you. Look, at least let us try and find something to help--

Kenny shrugs her off. Standing tall.

KENNY
I don't need help, Sam. I just need to get outta here. We both do.

Sam hesitates. Backing away. Deserting him.

SAM
I made a promise, Ken. I can't leave them. Especially now.

KENNY
We don't belong here, Sam. This is not who we are.

SAM
Not who we are?! Before this you were a failed mechanic, and I was--

An awkward silence. Kenny's face tightens. Heartbroken.

KENNY
I risked everything for you. Gave up what little I had for someone I barely knew. Now, when I need your help, you turn your back on me.
(beat)
I was wrong. You do belong here.

Kenny slings the bag over his shoulder. Departs.

SAM
Ken...

KENNY
Don't sweat it, Sam. You've always sold yourself for something better.

Tears fall from Sam's face. Brutalized.

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY

Alex and Lisa emerge from another TUBE STATION. Check the coast is clear. Hearts still pounding.

ALEX
We should split up. I'll meet you back at the warehouse.
(off her hesitation)
Hey. We're in it now. You said so yourself, right?

LISA
Alright, but understand something.
I'm not doing this for you.

Alex sighs as she leaves. Evidently hoping for something more reassuring. Tough... his phone rings.

ALEX
(into phone)
Hey. Tell me you have good news.

INT. BACKSTAGE, THEATER - DAY

Frankie picks his way through a maze of COSTUMES, PROPS and LIGHTING EQUIPMENT. Mismanaged by clumsy STAGEHANDS.

FRANKIE
Come on, easy with that! It's not like it fell off of a lorry.
(into phone)
You still there?

ALEX (V.O.)
(over phone, filtered)
Yeah, I'm here. What's the story?

The old man heads through a side door. Finding some quiet.

FRANKIE
Well, I wish I had something more positive for you.

ALEX (V.O.)
Don't tell me you didn't find him?

FRANKIE
Oh no, I found him. You're just gonna wish I hadn't.

INT. OYSTER BAR - DAY

A slice of Ireland within the rough and tumble of London.

Marv sits quietly in a corner. A half-touched meal of OYSTERS and GUINNESS in front of him. He fiddles with his ROSARY.

LISA (O.S.)
Penny for your thoughts.

The sight of Lisa warms his heart. He rises. Hugs her.

MARV
Hey. It's good to see ya.

LISA
I only wish I could say the same.

Marv pushes his plate toward her. Looking drawn.

LISA (CONT'D)
You're not hungry?

MARV
Ah no. Not for these fellas anyway.

LISA
They look pretty good.

MARV
Aye, they're okay, but once ya've eaten them right off the rocks of the Galway, it's a little hard to get excited.

LISA
Maybe it's not the taste you miss.

Lisa downs an oyster. Passes on the Guinness.

MARV
He seem... different to ya at all? Like hot and cold at the same time?

LISA
A little perhaps, but then again he's always been headstrong. Why? You think it's something more?

Marv shakes his head. Wrestling with it.

MARV
Ah, I don't know. Seems everyone's at each other's throats these days. Maybe our trade's just catching up. Does trouble me though.

Lisa glances at the rosary. Throws a curveball.

LISA
Maybe you oughta pray for guidance.

MARV
I hate to break it to ya, but he's never actually answered.

LISA
Guess thieves don't make the list.

They manage a pair of weak smiles. Uneasy.

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

Kenny stands at a TICKET BOOTH. Fidgeting like a snitch.

TICKET AGENT
Next, please.

KENNY
Cambridge. One way.

MONEY spills out of his hand. Rolling on the counter. He collects it together. Pushes it forward.

A large, cold-eyed THUG watches him from across the near-empty room. Nothing hazy about his intentions.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Kenny exits the building, TICKET in hand. The thug grabs him from behind. Hurls him into a alley.

EXT. ALLEY, BUS STATION - DAY

Kenny dives through a collection of overflowing TRASH CANS. Head-butting the side of a DUMPSTER.

The thug strolls forward. Stalking him. Kenny drags himself up on a PARKED CAR. Turns...

Meeting the thug's fist. WHACK! Everything goes black.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The crew sit in front of a PROJECTOR and SCREEN. Alex standing beside it. Ready to play tour guide.

ALEX
Okay, let's get started. Thanks to some well-placed enquiries from Frankie, we know that Stone has set himself up here. The Shard tower.

An IMAGE of the skyscraper appears. Lisa and Marv shudder. Ninety floors of glass with no means of escape.

LISA
Well, it’s a good thing we’re not afraid of heights.

MARV
To hell with heights. I wanna know who in their right mind thought it be a good idea to stick a giant glass turd in the middle of London? I mean, ya’d of thought those polly gobshites would’ve learnt their lesson after the fecking arseways they made with the Gherkin.

Lisa and Alex trade glances. Lost in the slang.

ALEX
Well, aesthetics aside, there is some good news here...

Alex returns to the briefing. Hitting a button on his REMOTE.

EXT. SHARD TOWER - DAY

The tallest building in Europe soars towards the heavens. Dwarfing its historic surroundings.

ALEX (V.O.)
... the Shard is a publicly-accessible building, so getting inside won’t be a problem...

INT. MAIN ELEVATOR, SHARD TOWER - DAY

The crew stand inside the cage. Traversing the seventy floors needed to reach the top. Needless to say, it takes a while.

ALEX
... getting to Stone is another matter. His penthouse occupies the top three floors of the spire, and it’s all privately secured.

Marv gestures at the CONTROL PANEL.

MARV
I take it we can’t just throw some fairy dust on the lift controls?

INT. OBSERVATORY, SHARD TOWER - DAY

The crew step off the elevator and into an open hall lined with FLOOR TO CEILING WINDOWS. A lighthouse without the bulb.

ALEX
Afraid not. They only go as far as the observation deck. From there...

Alex leads the team toward a SECOND ELEVATOR. Blank-faced GUARDS standing on either side.

ALEX (CONT'D)
... we have to take a private elevator to reach the spire.

The guards step forward with hands raised. The crew pass through them and the elevator doors like GHOSTS.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Not ideal, but not impossible.

INT. PRIVATE ELEVATOR, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Alex hits a button on the CONTROL PANEL.

ALEX
The real problem, however, occurs once we reach Stone's apartment.

The doors open to reveal a WHITE VOID. Voices echoing.

ALEX (CONT'D)
From that point forward, all the blueprints are blank.

MARV
How's that possible? The architect would've had to file plans.

INT. PLANNING OFFICE - DAY

Nothing elegant about this place. Just endless rows of FILING CABINETS and STACKED PAPERS.

The crew hover over one of the desks. Examining a set of bare TECHNICAL DRAWINGS for the Shard's spire.

ALEX
He did, but if we're to believe them, there's nothing up there except glass and support beams.

LISA
Stone paid the architect to submit false papers.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Alex triggers the next slide... MARCO VASARI, forties. A tall glass of ice water. Obsessive on the details.

ALEX
His name's Vasari, and yes it would appear so.

MARV
Christ, now that's a man who pees sitting down and no mistake. I take it we're gonna pay him a visit?

ALEX
That's one way of putting it.

Alex moves to the final slide. A MAP of the Mendip Hills in Somerset county. Centered around CHEDDAR GORGE.

LISA
Somerset?

ALEX
Vasari's currently managing a new archeological excavation within the Cheddar Gorge caves. Apparently they've uncovered some pretty valuable relics down there.

MARV
So now he's a treasure hunter? Gets around, this fella.

ALEX
It's not as glamorous as it sounds.

INT. STUDY, VASARI RESIDENCE - DAY

Decked out with ARTEFACTS amassed from all over the globe. Egyptian masks. Aztec statues. African tribal trinkets etc.

A flustered EDWARDO VASARI sits at a desk. Buried in PAPERS. Glasses dangling on his nose. Not exactly *Indiana Jones*.

The crew cluster round him. Observing the messy display.

ALEX
His brother's actually in charge, but the only thing he's any good with is a fossil brush. Vasari's helping out while contracts are being sorted for his next job.

LISA
Well, as fascinating as that is, what's it gotta do with the plans?

Alex leads them through a door, and into the next room.

ALEX
I'm getting to that. Vasari's one of the best architects in the world.

INT. DEN, VASARI RESIDENCE - DAY

A modern day Da Vinci's workshop. Plastered with ingenious ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPTS in various stages of completion.

ALEX
That means his designs are among the most sought after, and as such, they rarely leave his sight.

MARCO is seated in an armchair. Fixating on his work with insecure eyes. Utterly paranoid.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The thieves stare at Alex. Unsure what to make of it. This sort of guy ain't their usual mark.

LISA
Are you saying he took the plans with him?

MARV
To an underground cave in the middle of nowhere? Who's he think he is? Some kind of Bond villain?

ALEX
Well, technically it's not just a cave. There's actually a small museum within the complex. It's got storage space, a couple of offices--

MARV
And a pool with sharks in it?

Lisa slips on her jacket. Catching Alex's eye.

LISA
Can I talk to you a minute?

She and Alex move away from the others. Marv shakes his head. Grumbling as he pops an ANTACID.

LISA (CONT'D)
Okay, give me one good reason why I shouldn't walk out that door.

ALEX
Look, I know it's not ideal.

LISA
You can say that again. The odds of pulling this off in two weeks were slim to begin with. Now you want us to skip off to cider country?

ALEX
Hey it's not like I'm shortchanging you here. We don't get those plans, we're gonna be going in blind.

LISA
This isn't just a bump in the road, Alex. It's a serious job, and we're already a man down.

Alex considers this. Undeterred.

ALEX
(matter of fact)
Then we can't afford any mistakes.

Lisa folds her arms. Knots forming in her gut. Griping.

LISA
C'est folie. Tout est folie.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Marv emerges from the building. Finding Sam off to the side of the quay. Leaning against a railing.

MARV
Ya were awfully quiet in there.
(beat)
Look, Kenny's a minnow, Sam. Bedford's not gonna go after him, he's got better things to do.

SAM
I hope you're right.

INT. TRAIN - DAY (TRAVELING)

Countryside hurtles by in a hypnotic blur. The carriage half full with a diverse array of PASSENGERS.

Marv is asleep. Alex beside him. Lisa and Sam are a few rows further back. Playing CARDS.

LISA
Seven... and there's the four.

Sam tosses her cards. Frustrated.

SAM
Unbelievable. That's four games in a row. How do you do it?

LISA
It's all about risk. You wanna win, you have to make sacrifices.

Lisa deals a fresh hand. Sam snatches them up.

SAM
(guarded)
Is that why you're here? Because you wanna win?

LISA
I guess that depends on what you consider winning. Some of us have... different goals.

Sam glances down the aisle pensively. Picking out Alex.

SAM
Something tells me that's the reason we're in this mess.

LISA
Hey, you want it simple, stick to picking pockets.

SAM
I don't care if it's complicated, I care about being left out.

Lisa stares at Sam. A guilty look on her face.

INSERT: A younger Stone and Alex being taught the subtle art of sleight of hand by an UNSEEN FIGURE.

LISA
It's not my place to tell you, Sam.
You'll know, when he's ready.

INT. PRINT WORKS - DAY

Graham hovers by a row of RUSTY MACHINES. Casualties in the drive toward all things digital.

GRAHAM
Did you really think a gutter rat
like you could escape from me? Hmm?

HIS POV: Kenny BOUND and GAGGED to a chair. The LARGE THUG stands beside him. Clutching a BASEBALL BAT. In his element.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
That you were somehow smart enough
to slip through my fingers?
(lifting Kenny's head)
Is that what you thought?

Graham snickers. Tossing Kenny's head back.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
You know, in a strange way I'm
actually disappointed. I guess I
expected more of a challenge.
Still, the outcome is the same.

Graham removes his knife from his pocket. Kenny's eyes widening as he advances on him.

The bastard sees it. Smiles.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Oh, don't be afraid, little rat.
Your wasted life is going to serve
a purpose. Though sadly, we have to
make some changes first.

Kenny cries out as Graham begins filleting his face. The thug grimaces. Turning away. Too much even for him.

EXT. CHEDDAR GORGE - DAY

Moving over the beautiful RAVINE. A pleasant fusion of green hills and weathered limestone spoilt by...

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

Teams of ARCHEOLOGISTS and SUPPORT CREWS moving through the BREACH leading down into the caves. A flurry of activity.

Several GUARDS casually patrol the area. ID BADGES checked before entry is granted to the EXCAVATION SITE.

Alex stands atop the canyon. Dressed as a rambler. Snapping pictures with a TELESCOPIC CAMERA.

INT. TOWN HALL - DAY

The Vasari brothers join a pompous MAYOR on a news panel. Assaulted by REPORTERS with FLASHING CAMERAS.

Sam stands behind the crowd. Watching and listening. Searching for a weakness.

INT. SUITE, HOTEL - DAY

The top floor of a cosy inn. Austere yet adequate.

Alex and Lisa study a LARGE DRAWING spread out on a table. A work-in-progress MAP of the cave network.

They wield pencils. Attempting to fill in the blanks. They've been at it a while too. Patience frayed.

ALEX
Okay, so then the second tunnel veers right for twenty meters.

LISA
No! Ten meters. Twenty meters was the third tunnel.

ALEX
I thought the third tunnel was a left... or was it a right?

Alex studies a PAMPHLET on the Mendip Hills. Lisa tosses her pointer. Raking fingers through her hair.

LISA
C'est impossible! We can't do this with a tourist office brochure.

ALEX
Hey, if you've got a better idea, I'm all ears.

Sam enters, flopping down beside Marv. The old thief on his back with a TOWEL on his face. Weary of the squabbling.

SAM
You might wanna listen up then, because I've got us an opening.

MARV
(removing the towel)
Thank, Christ. Do tell, kiddo.

SAM
Well, Vasari just held a press conference. Turns out the work is costing more than they expected. So they've decided to do a fund-raising tour of the complex.

Marv snorts. Draping the towel back across his forehead.

LISA
They're gonna host a day trip for the rich in an underground cave?

SAM
It was Vasari's idea. You know, show off the work they're doing, what's still to come--

ALEX
When's the event?

SAM
Day after tomorrow.

ALEX
That doesn't give us much time.

LISA
It is ideal though. Construction crews will be gone. Most of the guards will be tied up with the guests. Plus they're moving, so we can use them to bypass sentries.

Alex shifts his gaze to Marv. Seeking approval.

MARV
Hey, I don't give a damn what we do, just so long as it stops the two of ya throwing a wobble.

Lisa and Alex exchange a glance. Abashed.

ALEX
Alright then. Let’s get to it.

INT. SUPPLY STORE - DAY

Packed to the gunnels with ropes, hooks, bolts, harnesses, and gloves. Ideal for caving and bondage alike.

Marv discusses his needs with two wiry, vampire-pale CAVERS.

EXT. BACK STREETS - DAY

Sam navigates a maze of alleys. Consults a SCRAP OF PAPER, then heads down a set of steps next to a HAIR SALON.

INT. BASEMENT, HAIR SALON - DAY

A thief’s candy store. ILLICIT EQUIPMENT scattered throughout the converted Victorian wine cellar.

Sam speaks with the PROPRIETOR, a grizzly Bulgarian who looks like he just stepped out of the Middle Ages.

INT. BASEMENT, HAIR SALON - LATER

The proprietor forges a miniature four-sided CLAMP on a craft table. Attaching it to a length of thin ELECTRONIC CABLE.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

One of the GUARDS finishes his shift. Brazenly counting his pay as he exits the complex.

INT. PUBLIC HOUSE - DAY

A rustic local. The kind frequented by heavyset farmers with tweed caps and lively personalities.

The guard slumps onto a bar stool. Turns to see Lisa flashing him a smile. Buying into it.

INT. SUITE, HOTEL - DAY

Sam and Alex fill in the blanks on the map... entrance, tour route, museum. They then add the SECURITY CAMERAS.

Alex draws a line from Marco's office in the museum, to the tour route, and then to the caves beyond.

FADE TO:

INT. SUITE, HOTEL - LATER

Alex stands in front of the map. Decked out in an ultra sharp suit. Hollywood suave.

LISA (O.S.)
What do you think?

He turns to see Lisa wearing a stunning BLACK DRESS. Riveted at the sight of her. A mocha angel.

ALEX
You went with the Armani.

LISA
Seemed appropriate for potholing.

She moves to fix his TIE. The act oddly familiar.

LISA (CONT'D)
Still can't fix a tie, huh?

ALEX
Wasn't much call for it inside.

LISA
And here was I thinking prison was all drinking and dancing.

Alex steals another glance at her.

ALEX
You look nice. I'd forgotten how great you were in a dress.

LISA
I hate to admit it, but you're not so bad yourself.

ALEX
Well, I gotta look the part.

She gives his tie one last tug. All set.

LISA
If only everything was as simple as slipping on a suit.

Lisa leaves him to ponder that. Maybe he does.

EXT. MENDIP HILLS - DAY

In the midst of the countryside. Above one of the OUTLYING ENTRANCES to the sizable cave complex.

Marv loads Alex up with CAVING EQUIPMENT. Sam doing the same for Lisa. An amusing sight considering their attire.

ALEX
So... got any final thoughts?

MARV
Yeah, don’t make a bags of it, or I’ll eat the head off ya.

ALEX
Right...

Marv slaps Alex on the shoulder as husband and wife descend into the cave. HELMET TORCHES dancing in the dark.

INT. OUTER CAVE - DAY

The thieves abseil down the uneven rock face. Their movements echoing eerily in the foreboding cavern.

Suddenly Alex’s PITON snaps. He plummets. Lisa instinctively swings out a hand. Grabbing him.

ALEX
Thanks.

Shaken, he reaches for Lisa’s rope. Sliding down beneath her.

Lisa tosses him a TORCH as they reach the ground. The beam of light revealing dark, twisted shapes in the menacing grotto.

INT. CAVE NETWORK - DAY

The hollows weave endlessly, peppered with jagged STALACTITES dangling over water pools. A beautiful, yet deadly arena.

Alex stops at an intersection. Studies a map drawn on a SCRAP OF PAPER. Lisa shudders. Claustrophobic.

LISA
You better not be lost, Alex.

Before he can respond, they hear FOOTSTEPS. Quickly ducking behind a cluster of STALAGMITES.

Two WORKERS wander out of a nearby tunnel entrance. Surveying the area with FLASHLIGHTS, then continuing on.

ALEX
Satisfied?

The thieves head down the SAME TUNNEL. Coming to a halt beside the entrance to a SECOND TUNNEL. Alex checks his map.

ALEX (CONT'D)
This is it.

Alex stashes their small BAG OF EQUIPMENT into a POUCH hidden under his shirt. Rounding it enough to look like a GUT.

LISA
So what now?

ALEX
Now, we wait.

Lisa looks around. Sighs.

LISA
Magnifique.

FADE TO:

INT. CAVE NETWORK - LATER

Alex paces back and forth. Lisa leaning against a rock.

LISA
You know, I'm curious, would it really have been that hard for you?

ALEX
Maybe I was just scared.

LISA
You think I wasn't?

ALEX
Come on. You were meant for it.

LISA
And you weren't?

Alex steals a glance at the adjoining tunnel. Praying for the tour group. No such luck.

ALEX
This really isn't the place to be having this discussion.

LISA
There is no place, Alex. You just have to lay your cards down.

ALEX
Yeah, well, right now we need to stay in the game.

Lisa sinks at his answer. Anguished.

LISA
That's all that really matters to you, isn't it? The game?

ALEX
That's not true.

She studies him hard. Searching his eyes.

LISA
No... no, this is what you love... that feeling before you strike. The thrill while doing it. That's who you are.

ALEX
You really think I'm that shallow? That there isn't something more?

Alex puts on his best face. Hoping to convince.

LISA
So, what is this then? Deception?

ALEX
Hey, I made a bad call. I admit that, but I never lied to you.

LISA
Lies are messy. That's why we use misdirection. Except you took it further than that. You're fooling yourself too.

ALEX
(struggling)
Why would I do that?

LISA
Because it's easier. Necessity and revenge are simple. Just like obsession.

Alex backpedals, shaken. Before he can respond, they hear a collection of VOICES and FOOTSTEPS.

LISA (CONT'D)
Here we go.

They duck out of sight.

The Vasari brothers file past. Presenting the PRIMORDIAL EXCAVATIONS to the snobby GUESTS.

Just before the last of the group passes, Alex and Lisa coast into the company. Blending with the haute monde.

The band continue through the labyrinth, passing several sturdy GUARDS. The sort who don't say much.

Rounding a corner, they approach the entrance to the old museum. Another GUARD in front of it.

ALEX
(whispering)
Uh-oh. Small problem.

LISA
Don't worry, *cherie*. I got this.

Lisa approaches the guard. Leans in.

LISA (CONT'D)
Excuse me, do you see the woman in the red dress over there? Well, I'm pretty sure she took something and put it in her purse.

The guard nods. Moving off to deal with it.

ALEX
You're evil.

Lisa flashes a smile as the duo head into the museum.

INT. GALLERY, MUSEUM - DAY

The thieves edge through the complex. FOSSILIZED SKELETONS watching them from within their DISPLAY CASES.

ALEX
You're certain there are no cameras in this section?

LISA
According to my new friend, they haven't been installed yet.

A GUARD suddenly appears out of nowhere. He's a big fella too. Mean-looking face, sour temperament.

MUSEUM GUARD
Hey! What are you doing in here?

The thieves glance at each other.

LISA
Uh... sightseeing?

The guard advances on them. Drawing a GUN. Alex kicks his arm aside. Flinging a couple of punches.

The guard blocks the last. Hurls one of his own. WHAM! Alex stumbles back, dazed. This guy pumps iron.

Lisa jumps on the guard's back. Distracts him long enough for Alex to regain his bearings. He kicks at the guard's knees.

The guard drops. Lisa rolling off. Alex grabs him in a headlock. Choking him till he passes out.

LISA (CONT'D)
Who taught you that?

ALEX
My cell mate. Three hundred pound Armenian named Razmik. He had a somewhat colorful past.

Alex quickly drags the guard out of sight. Creaks his neck, still seeing stars.

LISA
Well, we better get this done before someone misses Arnold here.

They vanish down a corridor.

INT. ADMINISTRATION, MUSEUM - DAY

Jammed with desks, papers and stowed EXCAVATION EQUIPMENT.

Emerging from the gallery, Alex and Lisa scoot into a small alcove. A SECURITY CAMERA rotating up ahead.

Alex retrieves the bag from under his shirt. Selecting the clamp and cable Sam acquired earlier. Loading it into a GUN.

As the camera turns, Alex aims and shoots at it.

LISA
It's on its way back.

The clamp locks around the RELAY CABLE. Melting through the PLASTIC COATING. Connecting to the EXPOSED WIRE.

Alex hastily uncoils the cable. Lisa removing a small TABLET COMPUTER from the bag. Waking it from standby.

LISA (CONT'D)
Ten seconds.

Alex inserts the cable's JACK into the tablet. Feeds of the museum SECURITY CAMERAS appearing on the screen.

He taps on it. Text flashing on the screen. IMAGE LOCKED.

ALEX
Got it.

LISA
He's gonna wish they hadn't gone with the closed-circuit option.

The two thieves pack up. Edging out into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY, MUSEUM - DAY

Alex peers round a corner. Two mindless SENTINELS standing in front of the doors to Vasari's OFFICE.

ALEX
Two guards on the door.

Lisa takes his place. Alex rummaging in the bag.

LISA
I hope you've got something more innovative than your fists.

ALEX
We could try a Guadeloupe.

A half-smile crosses her face. It's a fond memory.

LISA
You feel like stripping off?

ALEX
Actually, I was kinda thinking you could do it.

LISA
Why? You worried they'll laugh?

ALEX
I most certainly am not.

LISA
It's nothing to be ashamed of, you know. A little shrinkage is perfectly normal when it's cold.

Alex slips TWO ITEMS into his pockets. Glares at her, then heads into the hallway.

ALEX
(feigning inebriation)
Whoa! Hey, you guys see a blonde come through here?

Alex stumbles. Falling to the ground with a thump.

The guards exchange mutual sighs. Approach...

Alex whips the pair of TASERS out of his pockets. Stuns them. Both guards collapsing like rag dolls.

LISA
(advancing, sour)
A blonde?

Lisa removes a HAIRPIN from her head. Snaps it in two. Cracks the office DOOR LOCK... easy.

Alex pulls a SNAKE CAMERA from his bag of tricks. Gently sliding it under the door.

INT. OFFICE, MUSEUM - DAY

Overly neat. Sterile even. The camera pinpoints Vasari's desk, a SAFE, and a table covered with RECENT DISCOVERIES.

INSERT: Alex and Lisa on the other side of the door.

ALEX
We're clear.

The thieves make their way inside. Alex checking his watch as Lisa begins tackling the safe.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Sixty eight seconds. We've got maybe a minute before someone notices the camera's frozen.

LISA
No pressure, huh?

Pencil in hand, Lisa fiddles with the SAFE DIAL. Listening...

INT. GALLERY, MUSEUM - DAY

A solitary FIGURE walks past the display cases. Noticing the unconscious guard in the corner.

No sign of alarm, just a flicker of a smile. It’s Stone.

INT. OFFICE, MUSEUM - DAY

Lisa makes a note on the safe door. Heads back the other way, feeling for the tumblers.

ALEX
Forty two seconds.

LISA
You’re not helping.

Lisa bites her lip. Frustration mounting on her face. Alex checks his watch again. Time running out.

ALEX
Look, I don’t mean to rush you--

She glares at him. Alex knowing the look. Backing off.

Lisa reaches for the dial. Moving a single etch at a time. Waiting for the right sound... tick... tick... tick... CLICK!

She grabs the lever. Takes a breath.

ALEX (CONT’D)
Let’s hope it’s not empty this time.

The safe clunks opens. They peer inside... a STACK OF PAPERS. Alex seizes them. Flicking through.

He finds the prize. The REAL BLUEPRINTS for the Shard spire.

ALEX (CONT’D)
Bingo. Let’s get outta here.

Alex returns the other papers. Locks the safe. Lisa hurriedly rubbing out the PENCIL MARKS.

INT. GALLERY, MUSEUM - DAY

As the thieves make their way back through the gallery, Stone emerges from one of the alcoves.

STONE
Find what you look for?

They spin, recognizing his voice. Spines tingling.

LISA
Stone...

STONE
Lisa. *Ça fait longtemps*.

LISA
Not long enough.

She edges closer to Alex. Just enough to be noticeable.

STONE
You wound me, but I forgive. I used to it by now.

ALEX
What are you doing here, Stone?

STONE
Is not obvious? I come see old friend. Help during hard time.

ALEX
That's funny. I didn't think you had any friends.

STONE
Trust not easy found when betrayed. You me both know this now. Yes?

Like before, Alex retreats a little.

Stone catches sight of it. Smiling as he nudges the unconscious guard with his foot.

STONE (CONT'D)
I impressed, Alex. Finally you start embrace what game about. Maybe prison can change person.

ALEX
You have no idea.

STONE
Not so. You me both locked out, Alex. Both want retribution.

Stone leans against a display. Folding his arms.

STONE (CONT'D)
But only one can have. So, who will claim throne? Who be king?

Lisa's heard enough. She takes Alex's arm. Almost restraining him as they maneuver past Stone.

LISA
Goodbye, Stone.

STONE
Sorry about colleague. Is shame. Was so young, but is way of things.

The duo trade concerned glances.

STONE (CONT'D)
Well, best luck, Alex.

Stone gives them a nod. Disappearing into the office area.

INT. SUITE, HOTEL - NIGHT

The crew watch a NEWS REPORT on the television. Kenny's MUG SHOT on screen with the headline, "PRISON BREAK MEMBER DEAD".

NEWS ANCHOR
(on television)
The body of Kenny Tolson, a member of the group broken out of prison last week, has been recovered by police. The fugitive's remains were discovered by firefighters tackling a blaze at a print works south of Greenwich Park. Tolson's body was identified by fingerprints left...

Tears stream down Sam's face. She leaves. Unable to take it. Lisa instinctively going after her.

ALEX
(sotto)
You bloody fool.

Alex drops the blueprints on the table. Exits. Marv's face sagging as he stares at them.

INSERT: Alex in the hotel corridor. His cellphone rings.

ALEX (CONT'D)
What?

INT. OFFICE, ATLANTIC INSURANCE - NIGHT

Graham's corner-office is a personal statement within the web of depressing CUBICLES that flank it.

Warm furniture, a *Turner* on the wall, and a television airing the same news report the team were watching.

Graham cleans his nails with the tip of his blade.

GRAHAM
(into phone)
Now, is that anyway to speak to your employer, Mr. Reynolds?

INTERCUT: Alex and Graham on the phone.

ALEX
You son of a bitch. You actually have the nerve to call me.

GRAHAM
The nerve? Let's get something straight, Mr. Reynolds. I own you. You do as I say, you act when I say, and you leave when I say!

Graham jams the knife onto his desk. Vibrating with fury.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Now, have I made myself clear? Or am I going to have to burn the rest of your team as well?

Alex grits his teeth. Barely holding back.

ALEX
That won't be necessary.

GRAHAM
Good. Now, get to work.

Graham hangs up. Alex almost crushing his phone.

INT. BEDROOM, HOTEL - NIGHT

Alex tosses beneath the sheets. Sleep alluding him. Stone and Graham's words rattling round his head.

INT. PUBLIC HOUSE - NIGHT

Near closing time. STAFF sweeping up as the last of the DRUNKS stagger off home. Alex and Marv are at the bar.

ALEX
She'll never forgive me for this.

MARV
Ya don't give her enough credit. She may not say much, but that don't mean she ain't a fighter.

ALEX
It's not the same. She's not gonna just bounce back. Not from this.

MARV
Well, then for once ya're gonna have to get ya hands dirty. Ya ask me, ya're lucky to have escaped it this long.

Marv sips from his beer. Alex absently fiddling with a couple of peanut shells. Unsure of himself.

ALEX
You regret coming here? Doing this?

Marv considers the question. Gauging how far to go.

MARV
I regret a lot of things. Can't blame anyone but me-self though. I always made the choice.

ALEX
You don't believe in the profession picking the man?

MARV
(scoffing)
Not in my case. I was never meant to be a thief. Simple things were always enough for me. A boat and a reel, a knife and an oyster.
(beat, drinks)
(MORE)

MARV (CONT'D)
It may not be the easiest life, but ya don’t have to contend with this sorta thing.

ALEX
Was it really that bad? Being here?

MARV
I used to break people’s fingers for a living, kid. I’m pretty sure this qualifies as an upgrade.

Alex manages a smile. Marginally comforted.

Marv spins his near-empty beer. Staring longingly at the hard liquor behind the bar.

MARV (CONT’D)
I never should’ve let him go, but he was always so stubborn. I just couldn’t hold on anymore.

ALEX
Don’t beat yourself up. You held on to Sam. You kept her safe.

MARV
I betrayed her trust, and for what? To keep her alive a few more days?

Alex shrinks. Talking into his shirt.

ALEX
I don’t know what to say, Marv.

MARV
Don’t say anything. Just get us the hell outta this.

Marv marches away. Alex kicked in the ass.

INT. APARTMENT, THEATER - DAY

Alex stands by the window of the lavish, yet tastefully-decorated Art Deco flat. Admiring the striking views.

Frankie emerges from the wings.

FRANKIE
Guess I have to change the locks.

ALEX
I hate to crash on you, but I can't use the warehouse. Stone's gonna be watching it, and after what happened to Kenny--

FRANKIE
Yeah. I'm sorry about that. He was a good kid.
(beat)
Well, I better get you guys some sheets, hadn't I?

Alex manages a nod. Frankie pats his shoulder. Heads off.

INT. APARTMENT, THEATER - LATER

Alex rolls Vasari's BLUEPRINTS out on a table. Studying them with a renewed sense of drive.

EXT. FACTORY, INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX - NIGHT

Marv and Lisa skulk in an alley. Busting a PADLOCK on a side door with a pair of BOLT CUTTERS.

INT. FACTORY, INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX - NIGHT

FLASHLIGHTS sweep over a field of slumbering MACHINERY. Marv and Lisa weaving past. Headed for a row of SHIPPING CRATES.

They prize the LID off one. Uncovering a stack of smart WHITE PANELS loaded down with expensive ELECTRONICS.

EXT. SHARD TOWER - DAY

Alex places several MINIATURE CAMERAS around the building's entrances. Keeping tabs on the snake.

INT. OFFICE, CONTRACTING FIRM - NIGHT

Somewhere on the tenth floor. Cold glass and steel decor.

Alex flicks through the folders inside a FILING CABINET. Removing a FILE marked "POWER GENERATOR - SHARD TOWER".

INT. APARTMENT, THEATER - DAY

Marv has one of the white panels set up on a desk. Electronic cables running out to a LAPTOP.

He puts a SHOE on the panel. ALARMS flashing on the laptop. He tries a DVD, a PEANUT, a PAPERCLIP. Red lights every time.

FADE TO:

INT. OBSERVATORY, SHARD TOWER - NIGHT

Sam gently rubs the tattoo on her arm. Battling inner demons. She turns as Stone exits the elevator.

INT. APARTMENT, THEATER - NIGHT

Alex holds a TABLET COMPUTER. Sighing heavily as he watches VIDEO FOOTAGE of Sam leaving the Shard.

ALEX
How long?

MARV
Twenty minutes, near enough. I tried calling. There was no answer.

Alex lowers the tablet. Reaching for his JACKET.

MARV (CONT'D)
Ya want some help?

ALEX
No. I'll take care of it.

EXT. PRINT WORKS - NIGHT

Reduced to a blackened husk. BURNT RUBBLE scattered about. POLICE CORDONS flapping in the breeze.

Alex picks his way across the field of debris. Stumbling upon an entrance beneath a pile of TWISTED METAL.

INT. PRINT WORKS - NIGHT

Moonlight filters through several GAPING HOLES in the ceiling. Shadows eclipsing the rest of the ruin.

Alex squints through the gloom. Locating the grief-ridden Sam hunched foetally on a set of steps.

SAM
How'd you find me?

ALEX
GPS in your phone... I had a hunch.

Sam says nothing. Shunning him like an adulterer.

ALEX (CONT'D)
So, what did he tell you?

SAM
That he was Frankie's student, that you took that away from him.

Alex takes a seat nearby. Treading carefully.

ALEX
I was twenty two years old. Alone and stupid. I wanted the best teacher, the best training, the best everything.

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Bustling with SHOPPERS. A young Alex and Stone selecting targets... Alex rashly pickpockets a POLICE OFFICER.

ALEX (V.O.)
And I was prepared to do anything for it. Willing to risk it all.

Stone opts for a more appropriate mark. Pilfering the WALLET of a suited BUSINESSMAN.

ALEX (V.O.)
Stone was the opposite. Cautious. Smart. Hardened.

Frankie studies them. Gauging talent. Maybe more...

INT. PRINT WORKS - NIGHT

Alex stares into space. Contemplative.

ALEX
Maybe that's why Frankie chose me. I needed him more.

SAM
Why didn't he just train both of you?

ALEX
Rules. Frankie's old school. That means only one student at a time.

INT. APARTMENT, THEATER - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Stone receives the news from Frankie. Shock swiftly replaced with resentment. The kind set to define him.

ALEX (V.O.)
He offered to teach Stone after, but by then he was a different man.

Stone casts Frankie's nurturing arm aside. Betrayed.

ALEX (V.O.)
I'd forced him out. Changed him.

INT. PRINT WORKS - NIGHT

There's something new in Alex's eyes... guilt.

SAM
So my best friend is dead, because the two of you had a spat fifteen years ago?

Alex lowers his head. Unable to look at her.

ALEX
You must really hate me, huh?

SAM
Oh, I'd like to, but the truth is, I'm just as guilty as you are. I couldn't face going back. Knowing what it would mean.
(beat)
So I betrayed him. I turned my back for something... easier.

Sam shuts her eyes. Ashamed. She turns. Departing.

Alex exhales. Sick to his stomach.

INT. LOUNGE BAR, SHARD TOWER - NIGHT

The WEALTHY and PRIVILEGED pivot between the exceptional views and their colorful highballs.

Stone is midway through a solo CHESS GAME. A vengeful Alex approaches him. Hovering like a specter.

STONE
I only give truth, Alex. For this, cannot be angry.

Alex waivers a moment, then sits. Unable to argue the point.

STONE (CONT'D)
So you want play?

ALEX
I'm not here for games, Stone. I just wanna ask you straight. What's it gonna take to square things?

STONE
You think this about get even?

ALEX
I don't care what it's about. A man is dead. This has to stop.

STONE
So quit.

Alex backpedals. A dark look on his face.

STONE (CONT'D)
But cannot. Because spite of all this, you unable let go.

Stone glances at his fellow PATRONS. Hard to tell whether it's dismissal, or acceptance.

STONE (CONT'D)
Is ironic. We in highest building, with highest people. Once hate them. Now we same. Always want more, and break rule to have.

The snake half-smiles. Moves a KNIGHT across the board.

STONE (CONT'D)
This why I like chess. Game reward those who break rule.

Alex lunges forward. Swiping most of the pieces aside.

ALEX
You think I care about chess right now? Kenny is dead because of us.
(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)
If that isn’t enough to put all this crap aside, then I have no reason to sit here.

STONE
You want truth? Here is truth. I like game, because we all here. From king down to man. Most thief believe is better. They knight, castle, bishop, but great thief is all misdirection. Is pawn.

Stone retrieves a humble PAWN. Articulating his thoughts as he moves it across the board. One space at a time.

STONE (CONT’D)
And he move slow, till he reach end, but once there he shed all. Name, voice, and even speech.

Alex stares in shock. Stone’s accent is gone. His speech now fluent and clear. All Slavic traces have vanished.

STONE (CONT’D)
(lifting the queen)
Thus making him truly worthy of a royal position.

Stone returns the QUEEN. Alex dumbfounded. IT WAS ALL AN ACT.

STONE (CONT’D)
Don’t look so shocked, Alex. Our kind has always been dramatic.

ALEX
(bitter)
Why?

STONE
Because, dedication simply isn’t enough to be the best. The game demands a higher price.

He removes a PHOTO from his jacket. Tossing it to Alex.

STONE (CONT’D)
We’ve both paid the fee, Alex. All that remains is to see who’s the last man standing.

ALEX
What is that?

STONE
Something I took last week. I had intended to deliver it, but since you're here, you might as well just take it. Good night, Alex.

Alex is catatonic. Raped by the revelation.

EXT. ROOF, THEATER - NIGHT

Alex stumbles out. WHISKY GLASS in hand. Drunk as a skunk.

LISA (O.S.)
What happened?

ALEX
(with a snicker)
What happened? We lost, Lis. That's what happened.

LISA
What are you talking about?

Alex passes her the photo as he staggers toward a chair. It's an image of a VAULT DOOR with the word "ORION" stamped on it.

LISA (CONT'D)
He's got an Orion vault? Those are all custom made. It would take days just to figure out how to crack it.

It hits like a train.

ALEX
Hence the losing.

LISA
So, that's it? You just give up?

ALEX
You would too if you'd been there.

LISA
What the hell does that mean?

He hurls the glass against the wall. SMASH!

ALEX
It means he's better! Alright?!
(beat, sighs)
Look, this, all of this, it just... it isn't worth it anymore, not if it means losing everything.

Lisa sits beside him. Attempting to rally.

LISA
You remember what I said to you last week? About death?

ALEX
(guilty)
I couldn’t have it both ways.

LISA
Yeah, but what I left out, was that the risk was ours to take. We all had our chances to run, Alex, but we didn’t. We stayed.

Alex stares at her. Crestfallen. Afraid to ask...

ALEX
Why?

LISA
Because. That sick side of us. The part we pretend doesn’t exist. It needs to know if it can be done.
(beat)
Come on. You need to lie down.

ALEX
Yeah, alright. I just gotta pick up this glass first.

Bending down to retrieve the FRAGMENTS, Alex notices light REFRACTING through the BROKEN GLASS.

He frowns. Moving the glass with his finger. ALTERING THE POSITION OF THE LIGHT on a nearby wall.

Something stirring in his mind.

INT. APARTMENT, THEATER - DAY

The crew assemble round a PROJECTOR, turning as Alex enters. He looks at each of them. Humbled. Sincere.

ALEX
It occurs to me, that I never said sorry. I forced you into this, and for that we’ve paid a heavy price.

Lisa puts an arm around Sam.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Now, I could tell you that we're gonna make it out of this. That I have all the answers, but that would be another lie, and I think we've all had enough of them.

Alex rests a hand on Marv's shoulder. The older thief returns it with a supportive smile.

ALEX (CONT'D)
This crew came from nothing. We were gang members, pros, enforcers, and orphans. Yet here we are. We beat the odds. Let's do it again.

Silence as it sinks in. Eventually...

MARV
Well, I don't know about the rest of ya, but I for one want a chance to get even with that gobshite.

LISA
I'll second that.

Alex shoots her a grateful look. Faces Sam.

SAM
I don't wanna get even. I wanna ruin them. Both of them.

ALEX
Well, we better get started then. Marv... let's run through it.

MARV
Okay. The private elevator opens onto the main reception.

INT. APARTMENT, SHARD TOWER - DAY

The ultimate bachelor pad. Mood lighting, grand fireplace, stolen artwork. Guaranteed to get you laid.

The crew step out of the elevator doors. Strolling over an exquisite Turkish rug. No expense spared.

MARV
From there, we take the first corridor on the left, which leads us to a cross section.

Heading down the hallway, the team come to the CROSS SECTION. A further MAZE OF ROOMS and CORRIDORS lying beyond.

Alex circles a hovering GUARD. Easily a good five steps up from your average rent-a-cop.

MARV (CONT'D)
It's a good spot for a sentry, so Stone's probably got a man there.

SAM
He isn't using cameras?

ALEX
Not according to the plans.

LISA
I guess fifteen years of hacking them has left him cynical.

MARV
Assuming we can get past him...

The crew continue. Traveling round several corners. A couple more astute GUARDS patrolling the route.

MARV (CONT'D)
... it's a left, a right, then another left, which leads us to a set of steps up to the next floor.

They climb the set of winding stairs. Their main obstacle cresting the horizon.

INT. ANTECHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

An empty alcove leading into Stone's custom security system.

MARV
The good news is once we're there, we won't have to tussle with any more guards. The bad news is their replacement is far superior.

LISA
The security system.

MARV
The label hardly does it justice. Inside that hallway...

INT. SECURITY CHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

A womb-like corridor plastered with the same WHITE PANELS from before. Sharp BLUE LIGHT bleeding from the seams.

An ominous RED LASER GRID tops everything off. Stretching like a neon web across the length of the chamber.

It's disorientating. Like something Kafka might build.

MARV
... is a network of pressure panels and neon lasers which would make even Tom Cruise shit his pants, but that's not the worst part--

ALEX
Don't tell me... the controls are on the other side.

MARV
Right. In order to shut it off, ya have to walk through it.

INT. APARTMENT, THEATER - DAY

The thieves are silent. Faced with Fort Knox at a 1000 feet.

LISA
I take it killing the basement generator's not gonna get it done?

MARV
No, any major fault and it would just switch over to the main line.

SAM
What if we shut that down too?

MARV
You can't just shut down a main line, Sam. A building of that size is tied directly into the National Grid. Ya'd have to shut down power for the whole district.

A flicker in Alex's eyes. Marv senses it. Quick to intervene.

MARV (CONT'D)
No. Absolutely not. There's no way, Alex. Absolutely no way.

ALEX
Sure there is. All we've gotta do is get in there and cut the cable.

MARV
Cut the cable?! Okay, two reasons that won't work. Firstly, it's not a cable, and secondly it's in a secured building with hundreds of people working in it.

SAM
But, it is possible? Right?

MARV
Not without a distraction it ain't, and I'm not talking a firecracker tossed under a car. I mean a real balls-to-the-wall distraction.

Alex glances at a NEWSPAPER on a coffee table. The banner headline reads "G20 SUMMIT - PROTESTS EXPECTED".

ALEX
Like... a riot?

MARV
Ya're outta ya mind.

Alex folds his arms. Wheels beginning to turn.

ALEX
Assuming we could do it, how much time would it buy us?

MARV
Five minutes maybe, but that's not even enough time to drain what's left in the laser batteries.

ALEX
Don't worry about the lasers for now. You just get us inside the National Grid.

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - NIGHT

The once-familiar streets of London's East End. Now a crowded ghetto of disparate cultures.

Marv and Sam are parked in a SEDAN beside a rain-drenched sidewalk, PILES OF GARBAGE scattered round them.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Marv checks his watch. Rubs the wheel. Bored.

SAM
How much longer's this gonna take?

MARV
This guy's one of the best agents in London, Sam. He can afford to keep people waiting.

Sam stares at the SHUTTERED SHOPS. Graffiti strewn over them.

SAM
If he's one of the best, why'd he set himself up in a dump like this?

Marv watches as two ASIAN MEN wander past. ARABS clustering elsewhere. BLACK VAGRANTS roaming.

MARV
It wasn't a dump when he first came here. To tell you the truth, it's actually kinda sad. There used to be a real sense of community round here. Now, it's all gone to shite.

A huge BLACK MAN knocks on the window. Muttering something that sounds vaguely like Maghrebi Arabic.

INT. GAMBLING DEN - NIGHT

Dark and menacing. No high rollers in this place. Just a lot of INTENSE MEN with shifty eyes.

Marv tosses the black man a BUNDLE OF CASH. He gives it a once over. Motions them into the back.

MARV
Okay, listen up, unusual doesn't even begin to describe this guy. So just let me do the talking alright?

INT. LOUNGE, GAMBLING DEN - NIGHT

Straight out of bourgeois France circa 1800. Lots of heavy curtains, throw pillows and scented candles.

PIERRE, a flamboyant transsexual in a flowing robe, holds court over the bizarre mix of GUESTS and HEAVY GOONS.

Sam instantly recognizes him (not a good thing). Quickly attempting to hide her face.

PIERRE
Marvin! Marvin, oh, my heart is warmed. It has been so long.

Marv endures a sickening display of air hugs and kisses.

Pierre then moves over to Sam. Grabbing her chin with his fat hand. He tilts it, as if contemplating a purchase.

PIERRE (CONT'D)
And who is your rosy companion? She has such marvelous cheek bones.

MARV
Sam, this is Pierre. Pierre, Sam.

PIERRE
Enchanted. You look familiar, my dear. Have we met before?

Sam squirms. Attempting to shake her head.

MARV
She doesn't talk much, Pierre.

PIERRE
Really? If only we could persuade more to follow her example.
(releasing Sam)
Well, according to my poodles, you scarcely have time for a chinwag.

Pierre snaps his fingers. A half-naked SERVANT bringing him a hologrammed SECURITY CARD on a velvet pillow.

PIERRE (CONT'D)
So, one National Grid access card. Valid for all entrances and exits, including the machine rooms.

Marv takes the card. Examining it.

MARV
You haven't lost ya touch, Pierre.

PIERRE
Heaven forbid! There are so many foreign rivals today. One must work harder than ever.

MARV
Ya can say that again.

Pierre grins. Returning his attention to Sam. Mystified.

PIERRE
You know, I'm almost certain I've seen you before. Didn't you use to work for Jony Black? I swear he had a girl just like you, and now that I think about it... she was the only one we didn't find that night.

The master's GOONS suddenly advance. Drawing KNIVES. Marv backs up. Putting himself between them and Sam.

MARV
Ya're customer service seems to have slipped, Pierre.

PIERRE
I apologize, Marvin, but Mr. Black was a trusted associate and as much as I loath violence he does deserve justice for his rather grisly end.

Two of the goons move forward. Marv slams one with his fist. Quickly disarming the other of his KNIFE.

With a spin, he forces the second thug into the wall. Jamming the knife through his shoulder blade. Pinning him in place.

The rest of the thugs edge in. Ready for a fight. Pierre stopping them with a flick of his hand.

PIERRE (CONT'D)
(amused)
You haven't lost your touch either, Marvin. Now, if you would kindly step aside, we'll end this.

MARV
Wait... there's an account at LGT Capital. The number is 4562781. Pass code AX9Z34. There's enough in there to settle this.

Pierre considers the offer. Weighing options.

PIERRE
You've never given me a reason to distrust you, Marvin. I sincerely hope that's not about to change.

He throws a sickening smile. Bidding them away with one hand, while scolding his defeated goons with the other.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The two thieves dive into the car. Marv gunning the engine. As he goes for the stick, Sam grabs his hand. Shaking.

SAM
Marv... thanks.

He squeezes her hand. Hits the gas.

INT. APARTMENT, THEATER - MONTAGE

Marv and Alex hover over a DIAGRAM of light entering a PRISM.

Lisa experiments with an INFRARED HEAT DETECTOR attached to a cellphone. Observing THERMAL MOVEMENT in the next room.

Marv receives a DELIVERY from a COURIER. Dumping the contents of the BOX on a table... hundreds of TINY PRISMS.

Sam sticks a MINIATURE SPEAKER on the wall. Testing it with a SEPARATE DEVICE. It emits a CAT HOWL.

Marv hooks a PRISM up to a MICRO MOTOR. Aiming LIGHT through it. The motor turns. Angling the BEAM to a new target.

INT. ROOF, THEATER - DAWN

The sun peeps over the horizon. Alex oblivious to it. His eyes locked squarely on the vault photo.

LISA
Still in limbo?

ALEX
Maybe it’s one obstacle too many.

He lowers the picture. Stares out at the city.

LISA
You’ll figure it out. You always do.

ALEX
If that were really true, we’d still be together. Wouldn’t we?

LISA
(sitting beside him)
You know... it's possible, that you're not entirely to blame.

ALEX
Yeah? How's that?

Lisa hesitates. Searching for the right words.

LISA
Because I pushed you. I know what it's like to get trapped in a bad thing. I wanted to get you out before it happened. So I figured two birds, you know?

ALEX
Why didn't you tell me the truth?

LISA
(amused)
I didn't wanna scare you off.

Alex returns her smile. The two of them chuckle.

ALEX
So what you're saying is, in a way, the baby was misdirection.

LISA
Oh God, don't say that. I'll never be able to look the kid in the eye.

His smile begins to fade. He frowns. Lifting the photo.

LISA (CONT'D)
Quoi?

ALEX
Son of a bitch... we're ready.

FADE TO:

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY

The G20 PROTESTERS make their way through the streets. Waving PLACARDS. Shouting slogans. Achieving little.

EXT. NATIONAL GRID BUILDING - DAY

A TRANSIT VAN pulls up to the edge of the street, Lisa behind the wheel. Protesters slowly making their way towards her.

INT. LOBBY, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Wearing MAINTENANCE UNIFORMS, Alex, Sam and Marv stroll through the glass fish tank. Carrying BAGS OF EQUIPMENT.

As Marv and Alex head for the main elevator, Sam peels off. Tossing SOMETHING into a GARBAGE CAN.

INT. TRANSIT VAN - DAY

Lisa fiddles with an ELECTRONIC ROAD SIGN attached to a LARGE RIG. Enabling its power source.

INT. LOBBY, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Sam stands by a security ACCESS DOOR plastered with a big “NO ENTRY” sign. She activates a DEVICE in her pocket.

The trash can starts HOWLING LIKE A CAT. Distracting the SECURITY GUARDS on the front desk.

Sam slips through the door. Unnoticed.

INT. BASEMENT, SHARD TOWER - DAY

No refined glass and chrome down here, just lots of CONCRETE CORRIDORS and UNFRIENDLY MACHINERY.

Sam hurries down a flight of stairs. Ducking some JANITORS as she traverses the underground complex.

INT. TRANSIT VAN - DAY

Lisa slides open a CUT SECTION of the roof, then flicks a switch. The electronic sign rising up and out.

EXT. NATIONAL GRID BUILDING - DAY

Clear of the van, Lisa activates the sign. Offensive messages cycle past... “WE HATE POOR PEOPLE!” etc.

The protesters notice the sign. Their blood boiling as they hurl an assortment of BOTTLES and ROCKS.

Within seconds, it’s a RIOT.

INT. RECEPTION, NATIONAL GRID BUILDING - DAY

EMPLOYEES scatter as the protesters charge through the security barricades. Flipping tables. Smashing windows etc.

Lisa casually slides in with the hoard. Disappearing down a corridor leading to the INDUSTRIAL CORE of the building.

INT. OBSERVATORY, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Alex and Marv exit the MAIN ELEVATORS. They approach the GUARDS. Tossing them a crumpled PIECE OF PAPER.

MARV
Work order.

LARRY and MOE check it over. Disgruntled.

LARRY
There’s nuffing wrong with the elevator. It’s working fine.

ALEX
You having a laugh?

INT. PRIVATE ELEVATOR, SHARD TOWER - DAY

The guards open the doors. Alex and Marv follow them inside.

MOE
See? It’s all kosher.

Alex TASERS them. Marv hitting a button on the CONTROL PANEL.

MARV
So it is.

ALEX
(into earpiece)
Sam, we’re in the second lift. What’s your status?

INT. GENERATOR ROOM, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Sam pushes the door open. Arriving at the industrial gut of the tower... a noisy MACHINE covered with gauges and valves.

SAM
(into earpiece)
Right on schedule.

INT. MACHINE LABYRINTH - DAY

A hellish incarnation of *Pipe Dream*. Dense. Claustrophobic. Stretching endlessly.

Lisa works her way through the network. Struggling to keep track of her intended route. Backtracking more than once.

ALEX (V.O.)
(over earpiece, filtered)
How about you, Lis?

LISA
(into earpiece)
Give me a minute, will you? It’s not exactly signposted.

INT. GENERATOR ROOM, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Sam slides under the generator. Fixing a small EXPLOSIVE CHARGE to the base of the machine.

INT. PRIVATE ELEVATOR, SHARD TOWER - DAY

The duo head for the apartment. Marv toying with his rosary.

MARV
Bet ya a tenner he’s standing by the doors.

ALEX
Twenty.

Ding! The elevator doors open...

INT. APARTMENT, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Empty. They glance at each other. Okay, to business.

Marv removes a PELLET GUN from his bag. Tossing the thermal detection device to Alex.

INT. MACHINE LABYRINTH - DAY

Lisa dodges several ENGINEERS and TECHNICIANS. Arriving at a LOCKED DOOR. She swipes the access card. Prays. GREEN LIGHT.

INT. APARTMENT, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Alex and Marv edge forward. Detecting movement in the nearby rooms via the thermal display.

When necessary, they fire a STICKY PELLET containing one of the MINIATURE SPEAKERS. Cat howls serving as a diversion.

INT. REGULATORS, MACHINE LABYRINTH - DAY

Lisa anxiously approaches her target... towering MACHINES littered with switches, dials and levers.

INT. ANTECHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

The duo climb the last of the stairs. Reaching the alcove in front of the security chamber... still no sign of Stone.

Alex strips out of his uniform. Underneath, he is wearing a black LYCRA SUIT covered with interconnected PRISMS.

A small CPU / POWER SOURCE completes the outfit. Strapped across his waist under a lining of prisms.

Alex empties his jacket pockets. Pulling on a pair of PRISM GLOVES, a BALACLAVA, and OVERLAYS for his shoes.

Marv takes the discarded uniform. Stuffs it into the bag, then hits a tiny switch on the CPU pack.

ALEX
(into earpiece)
Sam, we're set to go. Lisa?

INT. REGULATORS, MACHINE LABYRINTH - DAY

Lisa scours the machinery. Lost in a sea of control panels.

LISA
Be right with you.

ALEX (V.O.)
(over earpiece, filtered)
We're somewhat exposed up here.

LISA
You're not helping, *cherie*.

INT. ANTECHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Torturous seconds tick by. Marv shakes his head. Whispering what they're both thinking.

MARV
This is taking too long.

ALEX
(into earpiece)
We're running out of time, Lis.

INT. REGULATORS, MACHINE LABYRINTH - DAY

Lisa moves feverishly. Finally catching sight of her target... the auxiliary CONTROL SYSTEM.

LISA
Come on... *ah, c'est ça!*

She yanks the MAIN BREAKER. Disabling the regulators.

INT. GENERATOR ROOM, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Sam pulls out the DETONATOR. Clamping her eyes shut as she hits the switch. BOOM!

A CONTAINED EXPLOSION rattles through the machine. Blasting its innards out of the chassis.

INT. ANTECHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

The lights flicker, then shut down in the adjoining security chamber. Pressure panels deactivated.

MARV
Counting down.

Marv clicks the top of an ANALOGUE STOPWATCH.

Alex takes a deep breath. About to enter, when suddenly... HALON GAS erupts from the ceiling of the security chamber.

MARV (CONT'D)
Motherfecker!

ALEX
What the hell is that?

MARV
Fire suppression! Some fool must have cross-wired the bloody thing. The power loss closed the circuit.

Alex's mind races... fuck it. No choice.

He steps forward. Marv instantly grabbing his arm.

MARV (CONT'D)
Are ya nuts? Ya'll never make it through there!

ALEX
We've got less than five minutes, Marv. I gotta try.

MARV
Hold on. I've got an idea.

Alex watches in disbelief as Marv PUNCHES A HOLE in one of the walls leading up to the security chamber entrance.

ALEX
What the hell are you doing?

MARV
The electrical circuits for the safety systems are on this side.

They pull the panel clear. A myriad of colored ELECTRICAL CABLES running through the dark space behind it.

MARV (CONT'D)
That means the wires that control the gas valves are here too.

ALEX
You remember which is which?

MARV
We're about to find out.

Marv fumbles through the wires. Isolating one.

MARV (CONT'D)
This one. I think this is it.

He holds it in his fingers. Hesitates. Scanning the others.

ALEX
Marv?

MARV
Just give me a minute, okay? I get it wrong, it'll set off the alarm.

Alex stands besides him. Powerless.

Marv rips the cable in half, and... the gas ceases. Alex slaps him on the back, then heads for the security chamber.

The old thief clutches his rosary. Looks up.

MARV (CONT'D)
I'll never doubt ya again.

INT. SECURITY CHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Alex cautiously steps over the threshold. Confronted with the menacing, and still-very-active laser grid.

He slowly raises his hand. The PNEUMATIC SERVOS stitched between the prisms begin to spin. Adjusting orientation.

The lasers strike the suit. Flooding through the CHAIN OF INTERCONNECTED PRISMS, and emerging as if unobstructed.

Alex takes another step. Lasers assaulting him from every direction. His body glowing like a giant RED LIGHT BULB.

ALEX
I'll be damned.

INT. ANTECHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Marv spins at the unmistakable patter of FOOTSTEPS... one of Stone's GUARDS is climbing the stairs.

Marv scoots out of sight. Edging just behind the corner.

INT. SPIRE ELEVATOR, SHARD TOWER - DAY

The doors part as Alex reaches the end of the hall.

He steps inside. Hits the "UP" button. An LED DISPLAY beside the keypad reading, "EMERGENCY POWER ACTIVE".

As Alex ascends to the top of the mountain, he tosses his balaclava. Wiping sweat aside. Readying himself.

Standby folks. This is what we've been waiting for...

INT. SPIRE, SHARD TOWER - DAY

The elevator doors open to reveal naught but GLASS PANELS and WHITE COLUMNS, fenced by a ring of BROKEN CLOUDS.

Alex steps out onto Mount Olympus. The mighty VAULT DOOR from the photograph lying just ahead. Beckoning slyly.

ALEX
You gonna show yourself now? I think I've earned that much.

A slow CLAPPING SOUND fills the spire. Stone emerging from behind one of the columns. He smiles. Vaguely impressed.

STONE
Congratulations, Alex. You made it, and in style too.

The two warriors face one another. Eyes locked. Refusing to surrender so much as a blink.

ALEX
I wanted to look my best for you.

INT. BASEMENT, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Sam hurtles back through the basement. Evading SECURITY and MAINTENANCE STAFF rushing for the generator room.

INT. SPIRE, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Stone shifts between the columns. A blur of skin and marble.

STONE
I must confess, part of me's surprised you got this far.

ALEX
You doubted me?

STONE
I had concerns. It's been a long time since you've had to put it all on the line. Yet you came through. The guards, panels, laser grid. You did it all. Well, almost all...

Stone slides his hand along the vault door. Teasing.

STONE (CONT'D)
I'm curious. How exactly did you plan on getting inside?

ALEX
I didn't have to. You're going to let me in.

STONE
What makes you say that?

INSERT: Stone giving his chess speech. Passing the photo.

ALEX
A great thief is all misdirection.

The blank expression on Stone's face slowly fades. A sense of anticipation in his eyes.

STONE
You've changed, Alex. You'd never have figured it out before. You know what that means?
(satisfied)
I've succeeded. I've freed you from your ignorance. Opened your eyes to the realities of our profession. Even given you a chance to survive them. The same chance you and Frankie never gave me.

Alex cannot help a smile. Seeing through the lie.

ALEX
You expect me to believe this was for my benefit? That out of all this, you took the higher ground?
(beat)
I might have accepted that before, but like you said, I've changed, and I know that this has nothing to do with opportunity or choice or any other bullshit you've dreamt up. It's simply about revenge.

Stone weathers it a moment, then smiles. Done with the lies. Ready for the cold, hard truth...

STONE
If all I wanted was revenge, I'd have just killed you, Alex.

He takes a step forward. Unable to conceal his hate.

STONE (CONT'D)
No, the truth is, I simply had to know why he chose you, but that was never gonna happen. Not so long as you had your guard up.

ALEX
So, it was you. You gave Bedford the whole idea...

STONE
Of course. You didn't really think he was smart enough to come up with it on his own, did you?

Alex holds firm. Speaking with conviction.

ALEX
Truthfully? I didn't consider it. Maybe that's proof you're better. Or maybe you're just a paranoid bastard who can't let go. Either way, let's find out.

INT. ANTECHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

The guard makes his way inside. Noticing the RUPTURED WALL and set of exposed cables.

Marv grabs him from behind. Landing a punch. Both men struggle with each other. Falling to the ground.

INT. SPIRE, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Stone enters the combination. Reaching for the vault HANDLE.

STONE
I open this door, the game changes. Are you prepared for that, Alex?

ALEX
(without hesitation)
Are you?

Stone nods. He removes a FOUR-SHOT REVOLVER from his jacket pocket, then swings open the vault door.

INT. ANTECHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Marv battles with the young gun. Taking a beating.

The guard goes in for the kill. Marv dodges. Kicks him back. Sending him flying into the rear wall. DENTING IT.

INT. VAULT, SHARD TOWER - DAY

A white chamber. Free of distraction. Just Alex, Stone and the real challenge... FIVE IDENTICAL CROWNS.

Alex stares at them. Floored.

STONE
You seem surprised, Alex. It's all pretty logical really. You stole my shot, so I stole your idea.

The snake moves behind the row of crowns. Checks his watch.

STONE (CONT'D)
Two minutes left. Time to choose.

ALEX
You're actually gonna let me walk out of here with it?

Stone opens his gun. Loading FOUR BULLETS into the cylinder.

STONE
If you pick the right one.

Alex examines the crowns. Incapable of choosing.

ALEX
(regretful)
Tell me something, if you could go back, would you do it all again?

Stone pulls back the firing hammer.

STONE
Ninety seconds, Alex.

INT. ANTECHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Marv ducks a punch. Swinging behind the guard. He locks an arm under his chin. Choking him till he blacks out.

INT. VAULT, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Alex and Stone study each other. Searching for a tell.

Suddenly... a RUMBLING NOISE. Stone reacts. Off balance.

STONE
What is that?

ALEX
Misdirection.

Stone backs out the vault. Fury coursing through him as a POLICE HELICOPTER rounds the spire.

The snake tears back inside. Aiming at Alex's head.

STONE
No... you brought the police?!

ALEX
You brought them first.

Alex throws up a hand. Knocking the gun aside. Stone fires...

... MISSING. Alex cracks him on the jaw. Bolts into the lift.

Stone lets out a primal roar.

He grabs hold of the REAL CROWN, then slides open a FAKE PANEL on the rear wall.

Inside, is his emergency escape plan... a SONIC CHARGE, AUTOMATIC PISTOL, a BAG for the crown, and a PARACHUTE.

INT. SECURITY CHAMBER, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Alex races through the laser grid. Moving too fast for the prisms to adjust. ALARMS BLARING.

He tears off his suit. Wearing CASUAL CLOTHES beneath. Marv staggers to the entrance. Joining up with him.

INT. SPIRE, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Stone straps on his parachute, then attaches the charge to one of the windows. Seeking cover behind a column.

INSERT: Marv and Alex race through the apartment. Tackling GUARDS as they materialize.

The timer hits ZERO... a piercing screech SPIDERWEBS, then SHATTERS the window.

Tiny glass fragments are hurled inwards by the invading winds. Traveling like horizontal rain drops.

Stone moves toward the ORIFICE. Shooting at the helicopter. BULLETS STRIKE THE CHASSIS. Forcing it to bank.

The snake hovers on the brink. Wind ripping at his hair as he watches several POLICE CRUISERS converging on the building.

He shuts his eyes. Leaping out into space...

EXT. SHARD TOWER - DAY

Stone tumbles like... well, a stone.

WHOOSH! The parachute erupts. Stone soaring over the Thames.

INT. OBSERVATORY, SHARD TOWER - DAY

Marv and Alex exit the private elevator. Catching sight of the TOURISTS marveling at Stone through the windows.

EXT. SHARD TOWER - DAY

The POLICE rush the building. Sam craning her head with the rest of the BYSTANDERS. Spotting Stone high above her.

She looks about. Searching for a vehicle. Her eyes settling on one of the abandoned POLICE CRUISERS.

EXT. THAMES - DAY

Stone soars over the river with the grace of a London pigeon. He tugs on his control cords. Aiming for the opposite side.

EXT. SHARD TOWER - DAY

Alex and Marv barrel out of the building. Dodging coppers too busy to recognize them.

Sam hits the cruiser’s HORN. Attracting their attention.

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY

Moments later, the trio are roaring through the city. Alex behind the wheel. White-knuckled.

Additional POLICE CRUISERS join the chase. Pursuing them and Stone across LONDON BRIDGE.

Alex weaves round the semi-busy TRAFFIC. Making a hard right upon crossing the bridge.

Stone finally touches down. Releasing his parachute catches.

Surrounding VEHICLES screech to a halt. Barely missing him.

The snake pounds the pavement. Forcing a DRIVER out of the nearest SEDAN with his gun.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY (TRAVELING)

The cruiser rockets down the streets. Tailed by a convoy of POLICE VEHICLES itching for a fight.

MARV
There he is.

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY

The sedan pulls a one eighty. Twisting through the congestion in a cloud of WHITE SMOKE.

Stone sheers alongside a COLUMN OF VEHICLES. Sparks flying.

They blast through a CROWDED INTERSECTION. Grazing the crossing traffic. Clipping wing mirrors.

Stone leans out. Fires his gun. PEDESTRIANS scattering.

Alex swerves. Avoiding BULLETS...

... a stray round spiderwebbing the windshield. Barely missing his head.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY (TRAVELING)

Marv grabs the dashboard. Steadies himself.

MARV
Mother of-- He keeps this up, he’s gonna kill someone, Alex.

SAM
Yeah, us!

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY

Stone pulls onto the sidewalk. Bracing as he rams through a row of NEWSPAPER STALLS and CAFE TABLES.

More POLICE VEHICLES spill onto the streets. Converging on them from all directions.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - DAY (TRAVELING)

Marv's eyes widen. The police cruisers boxing them in.

MARV
Alex?!

ALEX
I see it!

Alex guns the engine. In striking distance...

... he yanks the wheel. SIDESWIPING Stone. The sedan spins, crashing straight into a LAMPPOST.

Alex reaches for the door handle. Marv holding him back.

MARV
No! There's no time, Alex! We gotta get outta here. Now!

Alex stares out the windshield. Glances behind. The army of police cruisers almost on top of them.

He smacks the wheel. Tearing off down a side street.

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY

Stone tumbles out of the busted sedan. Clutching the bag holding his precious cargo.

POLICE OFFICERS quickly surround him. Weapons raised.

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - ELSEWHERE

The trio dump the battered cruiser. Several BYSTANDERS murmuring in disbelief as they hurry into a TRAIN STATION.

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Flooded with COMMUTERS. A bedlam of noise and movement.

The thieves linger in the middle. Scanning the faces.

SAM
I don't like this. She should be here by now.

ALEX
She will be.

Alex spins as a hand lands on his shoulder. Lisa standing behind him. Clutching a BLACK BAG.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(with a sigh of relief)
I was starting to get worried.

LISA
I had some trouble with the jacket.

He takes the bag. Checking the contents.

ALEX
You sure you wanna do this?

Lisa glances at Sam. Nods.

EXT. ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY

Marv, Alex and Sam pull up outside the castle of glass and steel. Emerging from a CAB.

MARV
Keep the meter running, boyo. This won't take long.

Alex corners Sam. Leans in.

ALEX
Sam. You don't have to do this. We won't think any less of you.

SAM
Thanks, but I wanna see his face.

He smiles supportively. Slipping on a pair of SUNGLASSES.

INT. OFFICE, ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY

Graham sits behind his desk. Watching a news report on his television, "POLICE RECOVER MISSING CROWN".

GRAHAM
I have to admit, you've got balls.
(clicking TV off)
The police have the crown, but you came here anyway.

He rounds the desk. Folding his arms.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
I take it you're here to beg for your lives?

Alex unzips the bag. Cold as ice.

ALEX
We're not beggars. We're thieves.

He opens the flap to reveal the CROWN. Graham's jaw drops.

GRAHAM
That's impossible.

INT. LAB, ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY

Outfitted with lots of sleek machinery. The kind you'd need a degree just to name.

Graham stands over a TECHNICIAN working on the crown with a SCANNER. Metallurgical analysis and what not.

GRAHAM
(off technician's nod)
I'll be damned.

The technician departs.

Graham studies the trio. Searching for any sign of deception.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
How'd you do it?

ALEX
That's not part of the deal.

Failing to probe, Graham goes low tech. Opting for menace.

GRAHAM
Alright, then let me ask you this. Now that I have what I want, what's to stop me from killing you?

Alex smiles confidently as he reaches into his jacket pocket. Brandishing a stash of PHOTOGRAPHS.

ALEX
Well, I think these are a good start. I'm not an expert, of course, but I'm pretty sure this qualifies as child abuse.

Graham forces a conceding smile. Caught on the hop.

GRAHAM
It seems I wasn't the only one doing the watching, was I? Well played, Mr. Reynolds. Now get out of my building.

As the trio depart, the THUG steps out of the shadows.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
I want them to suffer, and make sure you get all those pictures.

The thug exits with a nod.

EXT. ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY

The thieves dive into the WAITING CAB. Fleeing the scene, and not a moment too soon...

INT. CORRIDORS, ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY

Graham wanders through the beehive of drab cubicles. Frowning at the sight of his scrambling WORKFORCE.

GRAHAM
What's going on?

The floor SECURITY MANAGER approaches him. One of those guys with a radio permanently jammed in his ear canal.

SECURITY MANAGER
There's been a security breach. We're locking everything down.

GRAHAM
Is anything missing?

SECURITY MANAGER
No, sir. Whatever they wanted, it was on the computer servers.

Horror washes over Graham's face. His mind racing.

GRAHAM
Which servers?

INT. APARTMENT, THEATER - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Marv works on a laptop covered in mind-boggling COMPUTER CODE. Uploading the contents onto a USB FLASH DRIVE.

EXT. COSTUME STORE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

CUSTOMERS emerge wearing SUPERHERO COSTUMES. Lisa exiting the store moments later with a BAG under her arm.

INT. MAIN ELEVATOR, SHARD TOWER - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Alex and Marv are making their ascent... as they pass the sixtieth floor, Alex reaches for his cellphone. Dialing 999.

EXT. ROOF, SCOTLAND YARD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Several POLICE OFFICERS race toward a HELICOPTER. The same one that will buzz the Shard Tower.

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DAY (FLASHBACK)

After the car chase... Stone is being forced into a police cruiser. The BAG containing the CROWN loaded onto a VAN.

A mixed-race POLICEWOMAN moves toward the wrecked sedan. Casually tossing a FIRECRACKER underneath it.

Using the distraction, she surreptitiously nabs the bag from the back of the van. Turns. Revealing her face. Lisa.

EXT. ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The trio head inside. Alex now clutching the bag.

Zoom in on his SUNGLASSES to reveal... a TINY CAMERA...

INT. CORRIDORS, ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

... relaying LIVE PICTURES to Lisa’s SMARTPHONE.

She observes the SECURITY CODES being entered at each door by the GUARDS escorting the trio. USING THEM HERSELF.

INT. MAINFRAME, ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Like the womb of HAL 9000. Colored lights buzzing rapidly on each of the COMPUTER MODULES. Digital chit-chat.

Lisa slips inside. Plugging the flash drive into an ACCESS PORT. Uploading Marv’s computer program.

As FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS begin scrolling across one of the TERMINALS, Lisa pulls out her cellphone. Dialing.

INT. MAINFRAME, ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY

Graham bursts into the room. White as a sheet.

He logs onto a WORKSTATION. Checking the accounts... EMPTY.

Graham has no time to react. His attention occupied by the escalating wail of POLICE SIRENS.

INT. CORRIDORS, ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY

Graham stumbles out the server room. Finding himself face to face with three POLICE OFFICERS. Busted.

EXT. ATLANTIC INSURANCE - DAY

Graham is led out in handcuffs. Watching with dismay as the crown is taken away by the POLICE.

Passing one of their cruisers, he spots the BROTHEL BOY inside. The kid grins. Giving him the FINGER.

EXT. THEATER - DAY

The cab pulls up. All four thieves climbing out with shit-eating grins on their faces.

ALEX
You go ahead. We'll see you inside.

Sam and Marv continue. Alex holding back with Lisa.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Got something for you.

LISA
Forty seven million isn't enough?

ALEX
Hold out your hand.

Alex returns her WEDDING RING. Stares at her longingly.

She looks at him. Unsure what to say. The weight of the last two weeks hanging heavily.

LISA
Alex... I don't know what--

ALEX
Let's just leave it as something to think about... okay?

Lisa considers him. Nods gently.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Come on, Marv's probably halfway through the booze already.

INT. APARTMENT, THEATER - DAY

The thieves rejoice in their success. Tension easing as the alcohol begins to flow.

Alex watches his crew from across the room. Pensive.

INT. GREENHOUSE, THEATER - DAY

Frankie is working on his roses. Alex steps inside. Leaning against a craft table.

FRANKIE
You pulled it off.

ALEX
Thanks to you.

FRANKIE
The pictures were the least I could do. Aside from finding Stone and lending you my apartment.

The teacher faces his student. Offers a smile.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
So, how does it feel to be a multi-millionaire?

ALEX
I don't know. I've never felt this way before. Truth is, I'm not really sure I deserve it.

Frankie sets his knife down. Trying to keep it light.

FRANKIE
Well, they do say success and guilt go hand in hand.

ALEX
That must be why I feel like the bad guy then. Stone was right, you know. He gave up everything for the shot. His home, his voice, even his name, and I took it away from him.

FRANKIE
We all make mistakes, kid. That's why it never feels like a victory.

Alex rests his head against the wall. Refusing to accept it.

ALEX
They're gonna lock him away for years, Frankie. I'm not sure he deserves that.

FRANKIE
I don't think money's good for you. Seems to have left you indecisive.

ALEX
You don't believe it's wrong?

Frankie shifts in his seat. Considering the big picture.

FRANKIE
Let me ask you this, do you think things would have been different if I'd chosen Stone? That they would have been better?

ALEX
I don't know. Maybe... course I could have become just like him. We were both as committed.
(beat)
Is that your point?

Frankie rises slowly. Sincerity in his weathered eyes.

FRANKIE
I had my reasons for choosing you, and they had nothing to do with sacrifice or skill. It was simply the right fit. That's all. Now, you can argue, debate, complain and wrangle all you want, but it won't change a thing. We made the choice, and we have to live with it.

Alex sighs emptily. Rubs his face.

ALEX
Yeah... I guess I was just hoping for a happier ending.

FRANKIE
There are no happy endings, kid. Not in this profession.

ALEX
So, how do you stand it? Knowing what you had to do to get all this, but that deep down it means nothing?

Frankie rests a caring hand on Alex's shoulder.

FRANKIE
Well... I got myself a son. Maybe that'll work for you too.

Frankie leads Alex out the greenhouse. Wrapping an arm round him as the duo gaze over London.

CREDITS OVER:

INT. CELL BLOCK, PRISON - NIGHT

Moving down Broadway. Unseen VOICES taunting a new ARRIVAL being escorted by a BURLY GUARD.

The guard unlocks the door to an EMPTY CELL. The fish steps inside. Sets his prison-issue CLOTHES down on the bed.

Burly locks the cell door. Puts his keys in his pocket.

PRISONER (O.S.)
Hey, pig. I'm hungry.

Burly steps up to the bars. Pointing with his BATON.

BURLY GUARD
There's a bar of soap by the sink. Bon appetite.

Contempt fills the steely eyes of the felon... it's STONE.

BURLY GUARD (CONT'D)
Lights out!

As the lights shut off, Stone approaches the bars of his cell. Clutching Burly's KEYS with a sinister smile.

Round two has begun...

CUT TO BLACK.